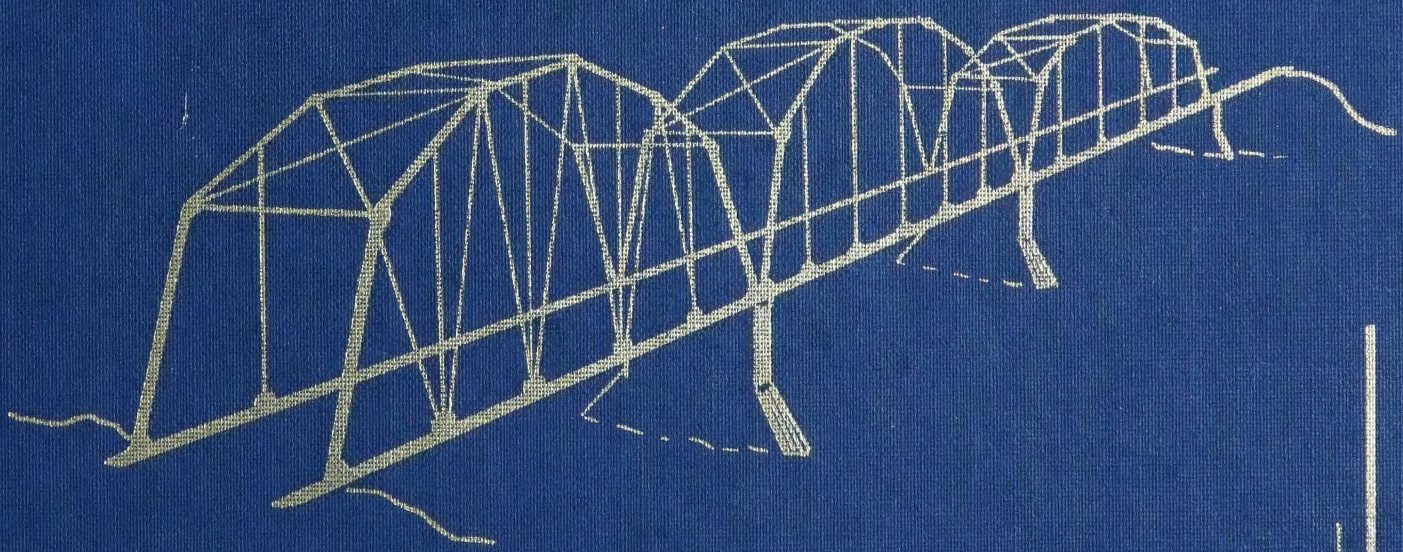
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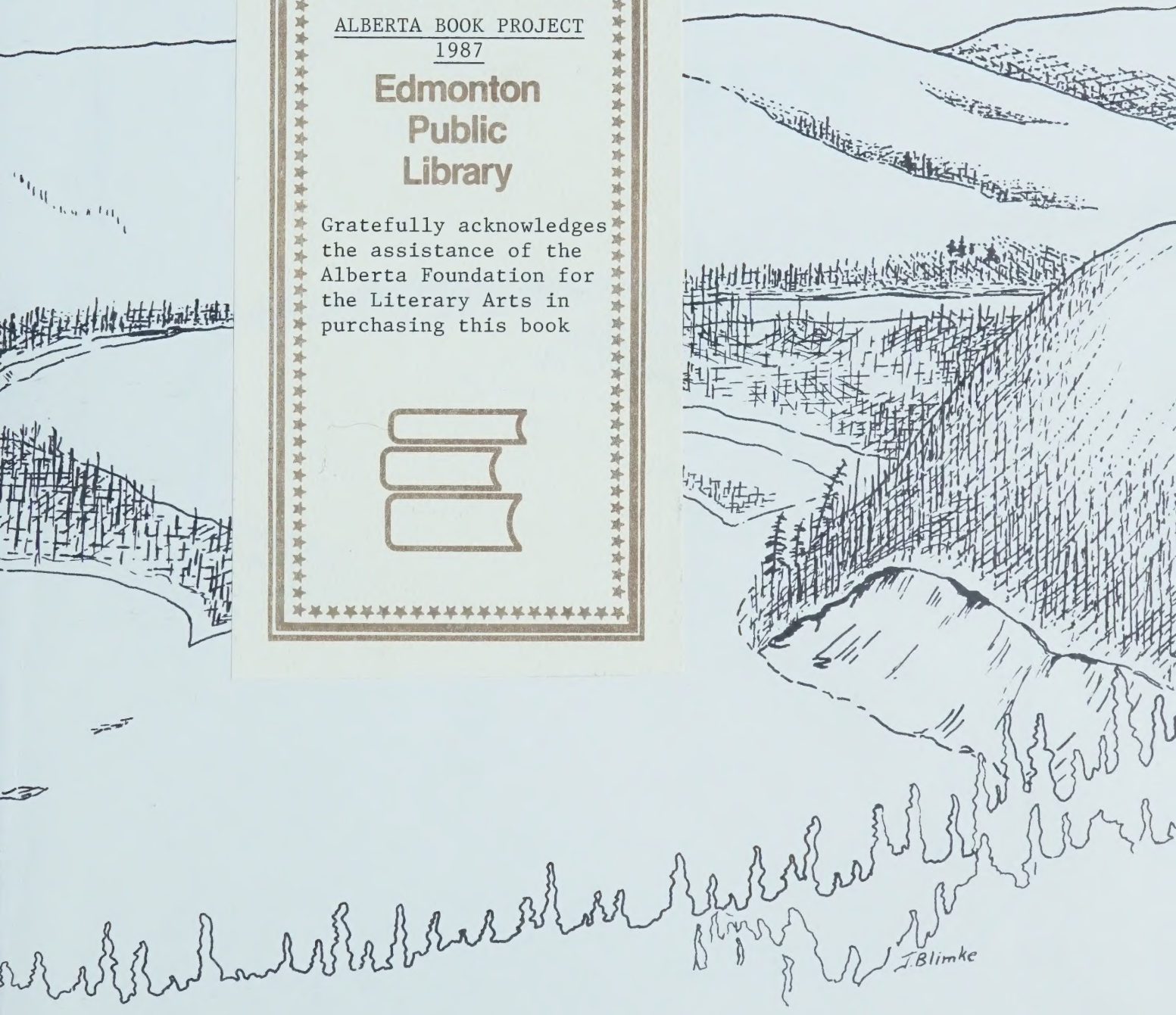


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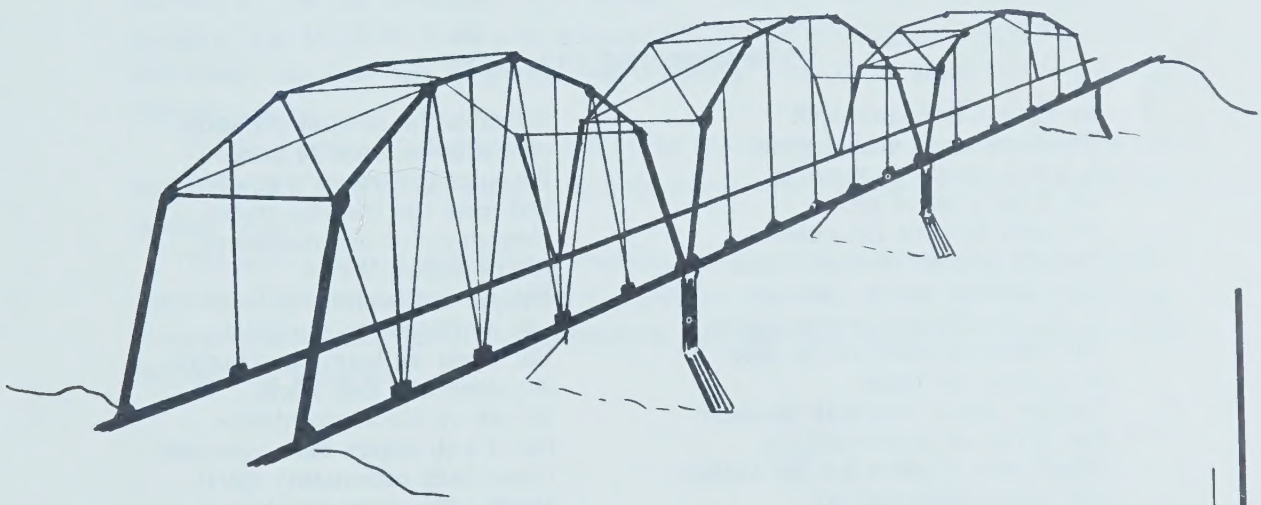
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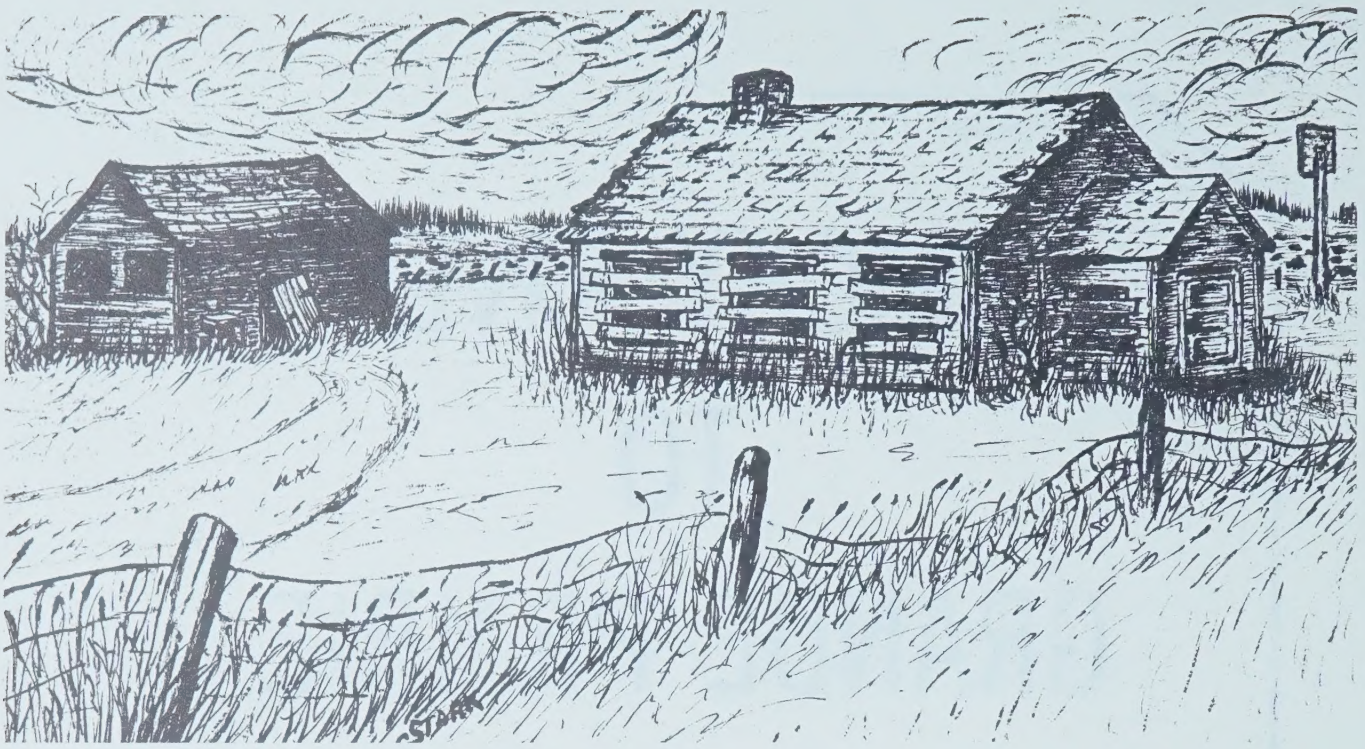



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SMOKY RIVER TO GRANDE PRAIRIE





POEM OF THE OLD DAYS

We have a lonesome spot
Where once our school stood.
It was a shame to move it
for it did a lot of good.
We used to drive for miles
through mounds of fluffy snow
With Dobbyn slowly trotting
to see the Christmas tree aglow.
The children would recite then
with faces all alight
And we would clap with laughter
and smiles of sweet delight.
There were candies for the kiddies
and apples there for all
Oh where is all the fun we had
and shared in that old hall?

We miss the community spirit
of which we were so proud
We miss the winter's gaiety
and miss the friendly crowd.
Nowadays for entertainment
it's to a show we go
But we see no smiling faces
and no friends to say hello.
But when we leave the theatre
we stand and look about,
To see an old acquaintance,
but it's strangers that come out.
Come back community spirit,
knock again upon our door.
Bring back the old rejoicing,
Make us happy as before.

by Mildred Lawrence

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FOREWORD

by Arthur B. Patterson, Editor

This book is a chronicle, a tribute to the pioneers who settled on the land from the Smoky River to Grande Prairie. It was, at the turn of the century, almost inaccessible, remote, and the last available virgin famland in North America. The cost in dollars, a pittance, was $10.00 for a 160 acre homestead; the cost in endurance, hardships, labor, privations, isolation and loneliness was immense; beyond the grasp of our modern, affluent society.

The first settlers followed the trail of the Alaskan gold rush days of 1898 from Edmonton north. They mixed socially with the native Cree Indians and the remnants of a Beaver tribe.

The early pioneers came from all walks of life. Among them were land speculators, farmers, illicit moonshiners, perverts, gamblers, prostitutes, businessmen, cowboys, trappers, carpenters, doctors and preachers. One trait they all were endowed with was the spirit of adventure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Executive of the Golden Years Club of Bezanson extends its appreciation and acknowledgements to the many groups individuals and organizations who made the dream of this book a reality. Especially to:

The Ladies' Auxiliary to the Canadian Legion No. 244 for the interest and foundation work which aroused interest and final participation by many.

The artists, Mrs. Joyce Blimke for the book cover, Mrs. Geraldine Stark for inside cover, and both for the numerous pictures and illustrations throughout the book.

The President Ralph Girvan, the Secretary Margaret White, the Treasurer Douglas Clarkson.

The "key people" in each School District, for their research, catalogueing and typing.

The many who helped proofreading.

The families who have contributed articles and pictures and all others who have assisted in any way.

To the County of Grande Prairie for making School Records available.

To the Alberta Culture and Historical Resources, also the "New Horizons" for financial assistance.

To Herald Tribune and Booster for announcements.

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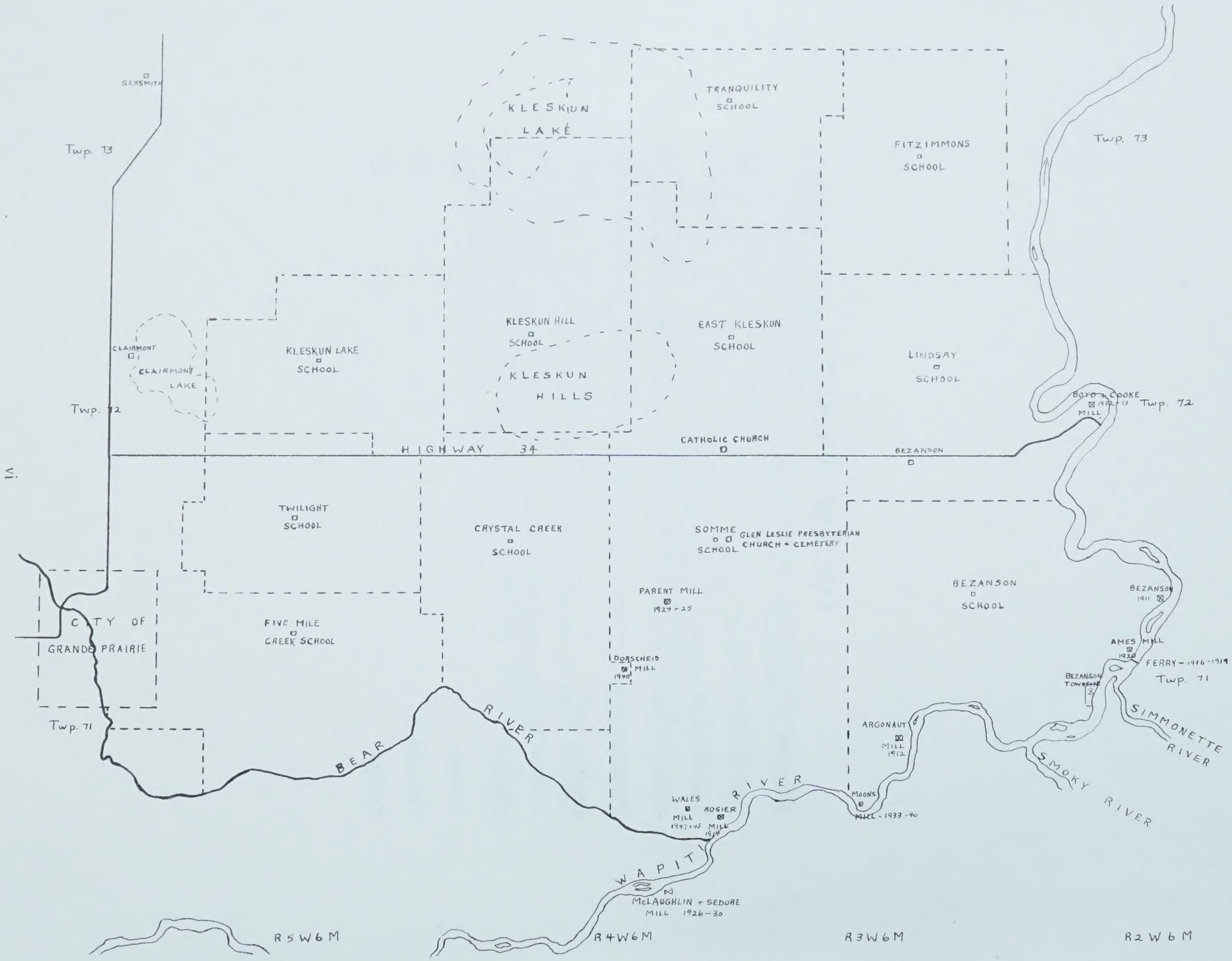
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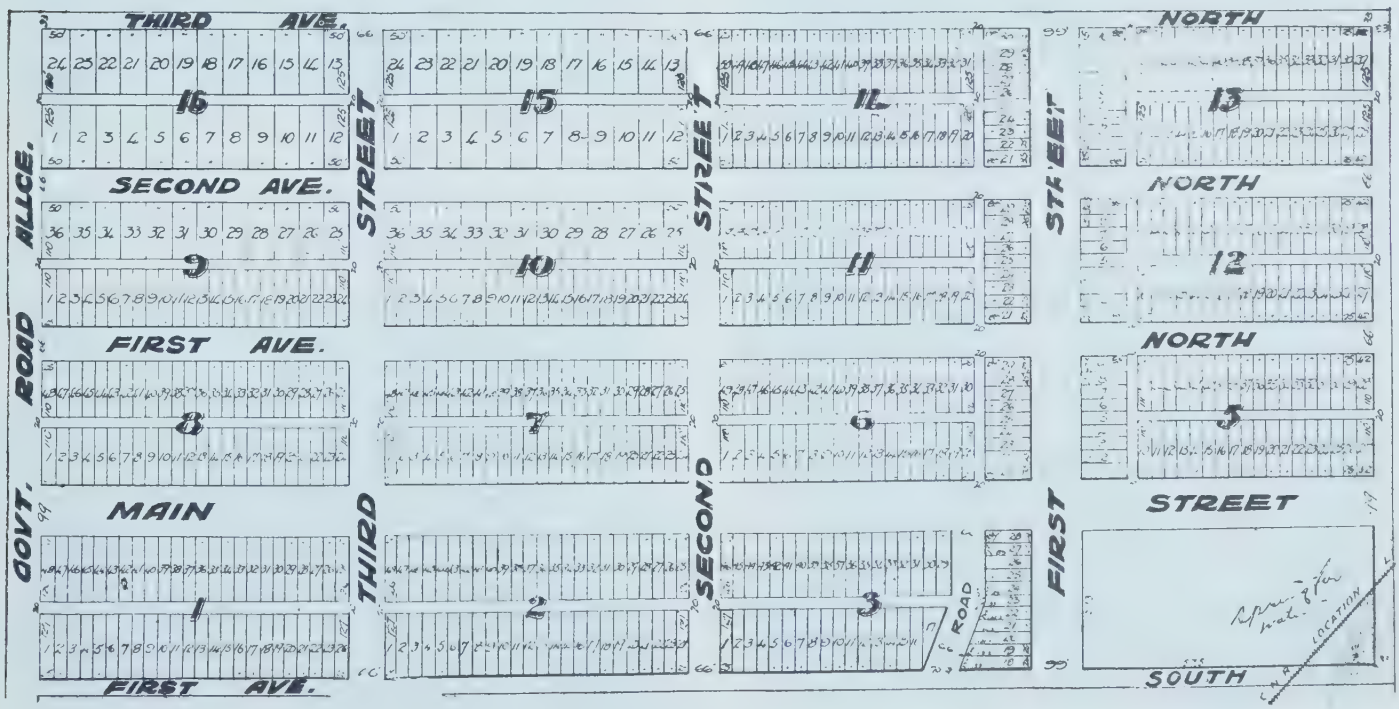
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Bezanson



Bezanson Townsite — 1919.



This is the way the town of Bezanson was laid out. Mr. A. M. Bezanson had quoted in his book about the townsite, "We intend to carry out the wide street for street cars every four blocks in the business section as more land is surveyed".



George Debolt and Dave Goodwin who with brother Jim, ran a stopping place for settlers coming over the Edson Trail.



A. M. Bezanson with 12 lb. Trout caught in Big Smoky.



Church gathering at Jim Goodwin's Minnie Williamson and Gladys Bryenton, Frank Stevenson, Norman Leslie, Jim Goodwin, Mr. McLarty, Jack Mitchell, C. M. McGillvary, Bill Leonard, George Tilley, taken in 1921.



Original Morrison Store at Bezanson being torn down to move to Glen Leslie.



Mrs. Gertrude Mattinson of Los Angeles (daughter of A. M. Bezanson) — makes 1st visit here since 1923 — June 28, 1968.

EDWARD ALLEN FAMILY

Edward Allen, my father, and my mother Dora were born at Wallaceburg in Ontario. There were four girls and two boys in our family: Pearle, Harold, myself (Cecil), Grace, Mildred and Leona. We moved out west in 1910, to Swift Current, Saskatchewan. A year later my Dad took a homestead fifty miles south of Swift Current, six miles south of Ponteix. We farmed there till 1920. Ponteix is only about 20 miles from the Montana border. In the eight years we farmed there on the bald prairie we had only three good crops. We had to pick buffalo bones off our land in Saskatchewan before we could farm it. There were deep buffalo trails which we had to drive over.



Mr. and Mrs. Hedley Johnson, Cecil and Ed Allen.

In 1920 we moved to Prince George. We stayed there only for a couple of months as at that time only the valleys were any good to farm. On August 12, 1920 we moved to Grande Prairie. We shipped a boxcar load of "settlers' effects". My brother Harold and I road as hideaways on the boxcar. The freight train was carrying perishable foods so we were only a few hours getting to Edmonton.

When we left Edmonton for Grande Prairie on the Edmonton, Dunvegan and B.C. Railroad it was a different story. Along Lesser Slave Lake the train ran into trouble and our car ran off the tracks. Before we came to a stop everything in our car was in a terrible state.



Mr. and Mrs. Ed Allen and granddaughter Kay Allen.

As I said before, my brother and I were hideaways on this car, but Dad would not let us ride on the car any longer. He had us walk through the mud to tell the conductor we wanted to ride in the caboose. When the train started again another man who was also a hideaway ran and got back into the same car he had been riding in, but my brother and I were left behind. We were only in shirt sleeves, but we kept walking in the direction in which the train had gone.

After a couple of miles of walking we found a parcel containing a big lunch, which we ate as we kept walking. We had walked about two hours when we caught

up to the train, on which the train crew was repairing an over-heated engine boxing.

Dad let my brother and me ride in the car, which by this time was only a few miles from Spirit River. Here we got tickets to Grande Prairie and rode in the passenger car. Mother and my four sisters had got tickets from Prince George to Grande Prairie.

We had relatives at Bezanson who met us at Grande Prairie and with whom we rode, in a wagon, to Bezanson. This was August 20, 1920. It was at that time 20 years since my mother had seen her sister, Mrs. George Stewart Sr. These were the relatives who met us and with whom we then stayed for a couple of days. There was a new log house only 2 miles from Stewarts into which we then moved. My Dad bought that quarter of land (S.E. 25-71-3 W6th) only a few days after we arrived there.



Grace Allen and Ida Colby.

My Dad and family always liked it here at Bezanson. They called the Peace River country the "land of milk and honey." The Bezanson school was built on our land, so we children had only a short walk to school. I took grades 7 and 8 at Bezanson School. At that time grade 8 was a government exam, for which I still have the diploma. All the other boys of my class took only grade 6 before quitting school. My sister Grace was the first one from Bezanson area to qualify as a school teacher.

We were at Bezanson only two years when we lost my brother Harold in the Wapiti River, on August 20, 1922.

I farmed with my Dad until he retired. He passed away at the age of 76, on January 23, 1954. Mother was in her nineties when she passed away on March 5, 1975.

I bought my first car in 1926 and during the "hungry thirties" I was the only one who always had a license on the car. When anybody in the district became sick, people would come to me to take them to the doctor.

In 1927 I bought a tractor and separator and for 29 years threshed grain in Bezanson and Lindsay districts and a couple of times across the Smoky in Goodwin district. The first fall of the "thirtys" I was still charging 10c per bushel for wheat, 8c for barley and 6c for oats. At that time we paid $10.00 per day for man and team, and $8.00 for a man driving our team and wagon. I can remember that first year of the "thirties" I threshed for a close neighbor who had fifty acres of wheat that yielded over 40 bushels per acre. He received 16c per bushel at the elevator for it. Since he had had to pay 10c for threshing, he would have lost 4c per bushel if I had collected my threshing bill. I had quite a time paying my crew, plus the gas and oil bill. That fall each man on the outfit made $300.00. But I managed to pay all the crew by Christmas.

The farmers I threshed were honest and they all managed to pay their threshing bills in the long run, though a few were a year doing so.

In the "hungry thirties," in the Peace River country, nobody really went hungry. We really had a good time. Everybody visited and we had lots of fun — dances, house parties, and lots of card games. This was true also in the forties and fifties.

But when the horses went out and were replaced by tractors everything changed. Nobody had time for anything. People worked their tractors night and day. I was in the same boat. One neighbor said that when he had horses he worked the horses; now that he has a tractor, the tractor works him.

At that time some of the larger farmers had four to five outfits working in one field. If I had my life to live over again, I would prefer to live it in the "hungry thirties" rather than in these days, by far.

I was married in 1939, to Dorothy McNally of the



Cecil breaking land with steel wheel tractor.



Cecil and Dorothy Allen — Dec. 1975.

Fitzsimmons District. We had two lovely daughters: Kay (Mrs. Don McRae of Grande Prairie) and Donna (Mrs. John Engelbert of Bezanson). They were born 9 years apart. We have four grandchildren, three boys and a girl. Sisters; Pearle married Fred Sanderson, May 3, 1935. They have 2 sons, Fred and Harold, both are married and have families. Grace married Bill Ferris in 1930. They have two children, Bill and Doranne. Bill lives in Calgary with his wife Betty and Doranne married George Watt and they, with their two children, live in Kaledan, B.C. Mildred married Dave Turner, October 27, 1937. They have three children; Lee, Sharon, and Robert. Lee lives in Whitehorse, Sharon (Mrs. Lyle Kuykendall) and they with 4 sons and one daughter live 10 miles east of Grande Prairie. Robert married Shiela Parks and they with their children, 2 sons and one daughter, live in Valleyview. Leona married J. C. Gibson (Slim) in August, 1942. They now live at Oliver, B.C. They had two children, Denise who married Harold Pope and has a boy and a girl (live in California) and Joe who lives near Slim and Leona.

I was born April 14, 1905, so I will be 72 in 1977, having lived in the Bezanson District for 57 years. I would like people of the district near and far, to know that you could never meet nicer people than you have been. In those 57 years I was never turned down on anything whether it was borrowing machinery or money, or buying feed or seed grain without money. About the business men in Grande Prairie I can say the same thing. I even bought my threshing machine without paying one cent down. They even supplied me with gas and oil, we were as honest with them as they were with us.

Cecil H. Allen
written February 25, 1977.

THE GEHARD BERG STORY — by Lillian (Berg) Cissell — January, 1977

Mr. and Mrs. Gehard Berg arrived from Viscount, Saskatchewan in 1940, it was early fall, beautiful weather. They were driving a 1928 Chev. car. With them were their 3 children; Lyle (born 1927), Norman (born 1929) and Lillian (born 1935).



Gehard, Tilla, Norman, Lyle and Lillian Berg, Charlie Stewart.

Their first house was a log one in the Glen Leslie, Alberta district, there Gehard worked for Ross Wales. The children went to Somme school.

In 1945 they moved to the Bezanson district where Gehard bought ¼ section from the county. A few years later they bought 3 more quarter sections. They now have Sec. 20-71-3 W6.



Gehard and Tilla Berg.

Son Norman and family live in the same yard and he and his son Gary do the farming. For years Mr. and Mrs. G. Berg, son Norman and family went to the bush for the winters. They have a lot of big bush and farm equipment. Now the older Bergs stay home by the fire and watch television.



Gehard Berg's first house in Bezanson — 1945.

Mr. Berg was a real musician and so are his children. He played for many dances at Bezanson years ago — all for free. He also plays the piano accordian and guitar.

Mr. and Mrs. Gehard Berg will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary this coming summer — May 9th, 1977.

LYLE BERG STORY — by Ada (Gresko) Berg — January, 1977

Lyle was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, April 27, 1927. Lyle's school days were at Nicholet, Saskatchewan. His brother Norman and himself used to drive a horse and cutter the 3½ miles to the school in winter, picking up other children on the way. Lyle moved with his family to the Peace River country in the early 1940s.



Valerie, Lyle and Ada Berg.

On October 1, 1952 he married Ada Marie Gresko (born November 4, 1931) at Bezanson. She was raised there. They bought her parents home place (N.E. 22-72-3 W6), and later purchased the Fred Dewhirst farm (S.W. 31-71-3 W6) also. To supplement his farm earnings Lyle worked in the bush every winter, for many years. He now drives the school bus. They have one daughter Valerie (born July 28, 1954).

Being a versatile musician, he started playing for dances at the age of 11 at Viscount, Saskatchewan. After moving to the Grande Prairie area, he continued with his music, playing with several country and western bands.



Lyle harvesting, fall of 1963.

Lyle's interest in sports goes back to his younger years, when he played baseball with the Bezanson Eagles for a number of years — as centre fielder and catcher. Ada works at the Bezanson Consolidated school as caretaker and secretary.

Their daughter Valerie is a high school teacher and presently teaching at Hythe, Alberta. She took her schooling at the Bezanson Consolidated school in the village of Bezanson, Alberta.

NORMAN BERG AND FAMILY -- by Frances Berg — February, 1977

Norman, the 2nd son of Gehard and Tilla Berg, was born on his grandmothers farm in Viscount, Saskatchewan on the morning of June 25, 1929. He grew up there and attended Nicholet School until he moved to the Glen Leslie district in the Peace River Country with his family in the fall of 1940. He finished his school at Somme School and then went to work for the Wales Brothers (Alfred and Charlie.)

In 1945 his family moved to Bezanson where his Dad bought the N.E. 20-71-2 W6 and Norman bought the N.W. 20-71-2 W6, from the county. He continued working for Wales Bros. for a number of years in the summer and in the winter, drove a lumber truck for Grande Prairie Lumber Co.

On November 3, 1950 he married Frances Eileene, born November 11, 1928, daughter of John and Aileen Birnie-Brown of Clarkson Valley, Alberta, and moved



There's always music when the Berg's get together — Norman Berg's family and Lyle.

into the old Anderson house on the Wales farm. Four children were born, Ellen in 1951, Rena in 1953 and Gary in 1954 and Gordon in 1963.

In 1957 when Ellen started to school, they moved to Bezanson where Norman and his Dad built a house on Norman's quarter. Norman started farming with his father and in 1958 they bought the south half of section 20-71-2 W6 from Mrs. Frank Crummy, giving them the full section.

In the early 60's Norman and his Dad bought their first 'cat' for brushing and from there went into the construction and logging business, forming the company of N. & G. Construction Ltd. They built roads and brushed in the summer and logged, first, black poplar and later pine for North Canadian Forest Industries.

In 1969 Gehard retired and Norman bought out his Dad's interest in the farm and construction business.

Ellen, Rena and Gary attended Bezanson Public School for their elementary schooling and then attended Sexsmith high school. Gordon attended school at Bezanson until the 6th grade and is now taking junior high at Sexsmith.

Ellen is married to John, son of Arthur and Marion Loewen of Crooked Creek, Alberta and have 2 children; a girl, Candice and a boy, Darren.

Rena is married to Robert, son of Harry and Ruth Logan of Crooked Creek, Alberta, and have 2 girls, Shelley and Theresa.

Gary bought a 'cat' and works with his Dad in the construction business.

JAMES BROOKBANKS

James Brookbanks homesteaded in 1912 in Bezanson (S.E. 32-71-2 W6) and son-in-law Fred Parker homesteaded near by — he had the (W.½ 33-71-2 W6). His wife (Mr. and Mrs. Brookbanks daughter) died and also baby daughter in 1914. They were the first to be buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery. The Brookbanks homestead has been and still is as The Adam Ranch, the blueberry patch for people from near and far.

DATFORD CANNON STORY — by Hazel Weegar — January, 1977

Datford Cannon and his wife and daughter Dietta came to Bezanson, Alberta in 1919 and filed on a homestead (S.W. 24-71-3 W6). Joe Thompson and his wife — who was a sister of Mrs. Cannon's — and Joe's father and mother came at the same time. Dat. was a good horseman and took pride in having them well looked after. He worked on Ford's threshing outfit every year after Fords came into the country. In 1919 he and some of his neighbours formed a Co-op and bought cattle paying a big price for them; then the market dropped and they lost heavily.

Mrs. Cannon joined the Women's United Community Club in 1919 and was an active member.

Dietta was very talented in singing and dancing and performed at the concerts. She also had a pony and was a good rider.

The winter of 1923 the community held some dances as they had finished the Bezanson Hall. At one of these dances someone saw smoke and flames to the southeast so some of the men went to see where the fire was. It was Cannon's house but they got there too late to save it, it burned to the ground. Cannons were at the dance and they lost everything. Mr. Severson gave a speech and suggested a collection be taken up for the Cannons. Fred Dewhirst and Hector Morrison passed the hat. Shortly after, the men got out logs and built the Cannons a new house. Later that year Cannons went back to the U.S.A. and I never heard anything of them.

GEORGE CISSELL STORY — by Lillian (Berg) Cissell — January, 1977

On June 25, 1952 Lillian Marjorie Berg (born 1935), daughter of Tilla and Gehard Berg of Bezanson, Alberta became the bride of George Edward Cissell, son of Agnes and George Cissell of Winfield, Alberta (born December 30, 1926). Their first home was at Dawson Creek, B.C. where George drove Northern Freightways Transport trucks for the next 8 years.

They were blessed with 4 sons Grant Earling (1953), John Eldon (1954), Lonnie Wayne (1956) and Terrill George (1958).

In 1960 Lillian and George moved back to Bezanson, where they later bought a farm (N.W. 30-71-2 W6). They and their 4 sons spent very much of their time hunting, fishing and camping.

On December 14, 1974 Eldon was united in marriage to Rosalie La Valley — daughter of Roger and Emily La Valley of Bezanson.

On March 29, 1975 Grant chose Margaret MacAllister — daughter of Yvonne and Walter MacAllister of Wembley, Alberta to be his bride.

Terrill was united in marriage on December 17, 1976 to Laurett — daughter of Margaret and Gus Audette of Bezanson.

Lonnie is the only one at home, and at present is working for Wales of Glen Leslie.

On December 8, 1976 Rosalie and Eldon were blessed with a baby girl — Carman Marie, our first grandchild.

FRANK COLBYS

Frank Colby was born in 1858 and his wife Hattie in 1862. They came from Michigan, U.S.A. He homesteaded in 1913 — (S.W. 30-71-2 W6). Ida was born in 1892 and Della a couple of years later. Ida



Mrs. Frank (Mattie) Colby with her supply of vegetables that she ably grew.

taught school at the little log Presbyterian Church (used as a school), on the top of the hill by the Smoky River — above the Bezanson townsite.

Mr. Colby died in 1932 and his wife in 1936. They are both buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery at Glen Leslie, Alberta.

GEORGE COLBY FAMILY STORY — Information from Marie (Colby) Fleming — March, 1977

Mr. George Byron Colby was born February 22, 1879, at Spencer, Washington, U.S.A. He was the son of Hattie (Winters) and Frank Porter Colby. His Father homesteaded in Bezanson in 1913. He was a half brother to Ida and Della Colby.



George Colby Family — Back row — Frank, Ed, Ivor, Bruce, Sarah, Avis, Marie, Esther, Father — George Sr. Front: Gordon, Charlie, Elsie and George.

On April 25, 1907 at Wetaskiwin, Alberta, George married Lena May Huyck of Howard City, Washington, U.S.A. She was born December 2, 1887. She was the daughter of Martha (Hale) and Andrew Huyck.

While living at Wetaskiwin, they were blessed with 2 boys; George Stanford, October 12, 1907, and Edward Frank, January 2, 1909. That year they moved to Lacombe, Alberta and while there had 3 more children; Ivor Milo, December 18, 1909, Imogene Martha, May 25, 1911 and Hattie Marie, February 9, 1913. Avis Maxine was born November 4, 1914 at Edmonton and Sarah May at Grande Prairie, October 13, 1916.



Gordon, Marie and Frank Colby.

In 1917 Mr. George Colby homesteaded the (S.W. 6-72-2 W6) in the Bezanson area. While living in Bezanson, they were blessed with 3 more children; Ruth Elizabeth, December 25, 1917, Esther Alberta, October 28, 1919 and Bruce Hardy, September 15, 1921.

Some of the older children went to school at Bezanson near Ed. Allen's when it was built. Their teacher in 1919-20 was Mrs. Todd.

In 1921 Alf Moon remembered that he and George hauled ties, one winter, at Spirit River, Alberta. George spent a lot of time working away from home to supplement the farm earnings.

From Bezanson they moved to Irma, Alberta where Frank Wilbur was born November 1, 1923. Gordon Meve was born at Scotdale, Alberta, March 18, 1926 and last of all Charlie Carl was born September 10, 1931 at Lindale, Alberta.

The 6 older boys all were in World War II. Ivor was the only one wounded. He got his discharge in July, 1945, was so happy to be back home again, but he passed away in the same year on September 4th.

Mother, Mrs. Lena May Colby died April 11, 1941 at Edmonton and is buried at Lindale, Alberta.

Father, Mr. George Colby died September 22, 1943 at Lindale.

All the children were married except Ivor.

Imogene had open heart surgery in September, 1974 and lived only a week. George Jr. and Frank both died within hours apart on January 22, 1977.

JOHN CRAIGS

John homesteaded the (N.E. 22-71-2 W6) in 1916 His daughter Jean was married to Bob Moon, who had homesteaded near by in 1912. Mrs. Craig had stayed behind to look after her aging mother in Edmonton, Alberta. John stayed here in Bezanson a few years and proved up on his homestead. When Bob Moons returned to Edmonton in 1922, he went back too.

PATRICK V. CROKEN — February, 1977

Patty was born at Emerald, Prince Edward Island, March 24, 1890. In 1906, he was working on the railroad — The Grand Trunk Pacific, also from Winnipeg, Manitoba to Prince Rupert, B.C. In 1915 he came to Winnipeg to live. But he had a pioneering spirit and in 1916 he and brother Rudolph bought some cattle and machinery and headed west, ending up at Bezanson, Alberta, hoping to farm. There were very few cattle in that part of the country at the time.

There were great prospects for a big town there at Bezanson, as the railroad had been promised to come that way. Quite a number of buildings had sprung up in this booming place already, including a blacksmith shop, pool hall, rooming house, flour mill, 2 livery stables, etc. Peterson and McDonald had built a big 2 storey building — 70' by 35' with 12 rooms upstairs and a store was in the downstairs part. They wanted to sell out as the First World War was on and the wives were sure their men would be conscripted and they didn't want to stay there alone, so they asked Patty to make them an offer. He said he hadn't planned on going into the store business, he and his brother wanted to farm or ranch. Anyhow Patty made them a ridiculous low offer, not expecting them to accept, but they did and that was the beginning of his store business.

Alec Williamson was hauling the mail and some freight from Grande Prairie, Alberta to Sturgeon Lake. He used to be at Bezanson 2 nights a week and was glad to have a room to stay in.



Pat and Daisy Croken — 1968.

One night during the winter while Patty was working late in the store, a man came in and wanted to know if he knew of any place that he could stay and get a meal. Patty said, yes my brother Rudy is cooking supper over across the way in our little shack, come on over with me. When we went to leave, this man said, "You didn't lock your door." We went over to our shack and when the stranger took his coat off, I saw he had a collar on. I was astonished and said, "Father! I didn't know you were a priest". The man said "SH . . . . don't let Father Josse hear you call me that, I'm Sandy Forbes, the Presbyterian Minister. We came to be good friends. The next day he wanted to know where he could find some people of the church so I directed him to go and see Gladys Moon. She would be able to let him know where most everyone lived as the Moons had been in the country since 1913.

Things didn't go as planned and the railroad didn't materialize (it went by the way of Peace River town), so I gave up the dream and went back to Winnipeg. We had a sale of our cattle, machinery, etc. We sold the store to Kenneth Morrison, who had just come to Bezanson.

However bigger things were in the plan for me. I married Rose Desi of Belgium this same year, 1919. I went back to railroading until 1923, but the call of the west was in me and we went back to the Peace River Country. We rented a store in Grande Prairie, Alberta for 3 years, then built a store, also renting another one beside ours from a Mr. Burbury who had a fur and clothing store. Later we rented this to J. B. Oliver. There was nothing in the store we got, for women to wear so we stocked our store with womens, mens and childrens wear, also had a grocery department. This store we ran for 45 years.

We have a son "Patrick." He got his schooling in Grande Prairie and then went to work in a little town west of Edmonton called Onoway. He is married and they have 5 children. They live at Onoway where his wife runs a store. He is a draftsman and works in Edmonton, Alberta. In 1958 Patty and his wife sold their

store to the Hudson Bay Co. and they retired making their home still in Grande Prairie. Mrs. Croken died in 1968.

Patty Croken was a very warm hearted person and still is. He felt he owed something to all the people who had done so much for him and his wife, so about 12 years ago he decided to do something for others. He gave $10,000.00 towards a bursary for graduating high school students in Grande Prairie, who display a high academic standing as well as school and community involvement. The interest from this money each year, which amounts to $1,030.00, is used. There is a board of trustees to handle the fund and is made up of one from the Separate school, one from the Grande Prairie high school and the Parrish Priest. John Hnatiuk was the first student to win this bursary.

Then about 6 or 7 years ago he felt he should give some more to help others, so he gave a $5,000.00 bursary to the Retarded Children, and another one, the same amount to be used the same way for the Senior Citizens in need. (The interest to be used each year.) Also he gave a $50,000.00 bursary for the education of boys who became Priests in Alberta and here also only the interest is used each year. At the end of 100 years, for each of these bursaries, the money can then be used, as the board of trustees, at the time, see fit. What wonderful services he is fulfilling. His heart is as big as gold.

Mr. Croken, a hale and hearty young man in mind and spirit will be 87 years young on March 24, of this year, 1977. His mind is clear and memory good. He still lives in his own home in Grande Prairie on 98th St. and Richmond Ave.

FRED DEWHIRSTS

Fred was born in England. He came over the Edson Trail with the Crowe brothers about 1910. He met and married Ida Colby in 1920. They lived with Colbys until 1921 when Fred homesteaded the (S.E. 31-71-2 W6). Here they went to live. Dick Howarth lived with them a great deal of time, especially when his Mother was nursing at the Pouce Coupe, B.C. Hospital. Lucious saskatoons grew near their house. Fred was not much



Fred Dewhurst with cake for Art and Gladys Reese and children, Janet and Gwen.

of a farmer. He was more of an entertainer, played the piano for many dances and liked organizing sports days. He decorated many beautiful wedding cakes — one was for Hazel Lupton and Ernie Ford. Another time he decorated a cake and the community had a shower and dance for Art and Gladys Rees and their 2 little girls when they lost their home and all their belongings in a fire.

When Ida's Father — Frank Colby died in 1932, Fred and Ida moved back to be with her Mother and stayed. Her Mother passed away in 1936.



Ida Dewhurst and her coyote hound.



Fred Dewhurst.

The new lumber school was built by Ed Allens not far from Colbys in 1919, and Ida Colby taught there and again after she was married as "Mrs. Dewhirst". Ida was a wonderful woman — a friend to everyone. She died in 1946 and is buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery with her parents.

Fred stayed on at the Colby Farm for a number of years, which he now owned. He had sold his homestead to an English couple a number of years before (Jack and Florence Haworth.)

He made quite a few trips back to England and each time he came back, he would bring some people with him. Once, it was his nephew Milton and his wife, Lilly. They would stay a year or so and then he'd bring someone else. One family was the Ted Eskdales. Later on Ted went to theology training school and became a minister of the United Church of Canada. He was ministering at Dawson Creek, B.C. in 1966.

Fred finally sold out and left Bezanson and went to Victoria, B.C. He was killed in a rooming house fire there in June, 1957.

THE WESLEY FERRIS FAMILY STORY — by Erwin — March, 1977

In 1903 Wes Ferris came to Cayley, Alberta (a little town 40 miles south of Calgary) from Ontario. He took a homestead 7 miles west of Cayley.



First Sunday Wesley Ferris family were in Bezanson — Oct. 1928. Arnold, Mrs. Ferris, Mrs. Rex Patterson, Elizabeth Stark, Erwin Ferris, Wauneita Patterson, Rex Patterson, Marion and Wes Ferris. In front, Mildred and Kenneth Patterson and June Ferris.

Lily Richardson came to Cayley from Ontario in 1904. They were married in 1906. They lived on the homestead for 3 years and then took over the Post Office and Telephone Office in Cayley and were there until 1922. Then they moved to Coronation for a couple of years. They had 6 children; Bill, Erwin, Arnold, Marion and Wilbert were all born at Cayley, June was born at Coronation. In 1924 they moved to Vegreville and were there until the fall of 1928 when they came to the Peace River country and settled in Bezanson district. They lived in Bezanson until 1941, then they moved to Goodwin, where they had taken homesteads.

Bill and Erwin joined the Army and Wilbert joined the Navy, in World War II. Our Mother passed away at Debolt in 1956, our Father passed away in Ontario in 1965.

Bill married Grace Allen and they lived in High Prairie for 25 years and are now living in Penticton, B.C.

Erwin has been around Goodwin and Debolt and now lives in Grande Prairie.

Arnold married Edith Platt, they separated after a few years and Arnold is employed as camp attendant for Canfor, at the present time.

Marion married Jack Auger, they separated. Marion passed away in Calgary in 1973, where she had lived.

Wilbert married Mary Williamson and she passed away in the fall of 1976 at Clairmont, where they had been living.

June married Elmer McLaughlin, they separated after a number of years. June is married again and presently lives in Grande Prairie.

MARTIN LEONARD GEARY

Mart homesteaded the (S.E. 36-71-3 W6). Mart had come from Mexico and he had a sister who married Dan Julick, they lived around Kleskun Hill (Tranquility District). They used to visit Mart. The Julicks had a son John. The Julicks later moved to Heart Valley in the northern part of the Teepee Creek area. Mart married. (A story related by Elmer McLaughlin was), Mart's wife had a glass eye. She would take it out at night and put it on a table by the bed. One morning it fell on the floor and Mart stepped on it when he got up, giving him quite a scare.



Ida Colby, Mart Geary, Pearl and Cecil Allen.

Mart was a good blacksmith and for a time had a blacksmith shop at the old Bezanson Townsite.

Around 1938 the Julicks came and helped Mart move his machinery, horses and household goods up to their place where he had a sale. Neil McLaughlin bought his land and later sold it to Earl Patterson.

GEORGE HADWAY

George homesteaded (N.E. 22-71-3 W6) in 1913, in Bezanson, Alberta. This old gentleman remained a bachelor. He farmed some. He had come with the

McGowans from one of the western States. He always went out threshing and he did a lot of breaking land for people. He had worked building railroads before he came here. He stayed for 6 or 7 years.

WILLIAM (BILL) HALL'S STORY — Information supplied by his cousin Billie Woods who lives in Grande Prairie. — January, 1977

The first time Billie Woods knew of his cousin; Bill Hall was in England, when Bill took Billie on his bike to see the first plane cross the English Channel.

Bill Hall came to Canada in 1913 to visit an Aunt in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia. Later he came to Saskatchewan to harvest, and then to Peace River, Alberta in the Peace River Country. There he became a ranger.



Bill Hall and his winters meat.

He joined up with the Royal Canadian Regiment and went overseas during World War I. He was wounded and sent home.

When he came back to Canada he stayed in Edmonton, Alberta for awhile, then came to Bezanson where he homesteaded (S.W. 32-71-2 W6) and got a soldier grant to get the (N.E. 19-71-2 W6).

In 1927 Billie Woods came to see Bill Hall and spent a year with him before he (Billie Woods) took a homestead at Goodwin, Alberta. Bill Hall sold his soldier's grant to Howard Henrys. Bill spent some time trapping and hunting in Goodwin. He had a shack near Mr. Knobbe.

Bill had a partner Tommy Dixon, who had a homestead near him. They did some farming but Bill wasn't very interested in farming, he liked to hunt and trap. He was an excellent cook especially "Hot Cakes". He built himself a new house, the logs he got were cut down by the Old Bezanson Townsite.

For awhile Mrs. Nelson kept house for him. Bill lived in Bezanson until his death in June of 1951.

THE HARDIN FAMILY

John and Ethel (Willis) Hardin, with their small children, Nora and Odie, left Southern Montana in the fall of 1904, to look at some land in Alberta that had been advertised as good agricultural land. They drove a four-horse wagon and also herded a bunch of horses which they sold at different points to pay the expenses of the trip. They arrived in Edmonton in 1906 and another baby, Dora was born there in 1907. The following year in August, Ila Susan was born at Stony Plain.

In the spring of 1909, the Hardins were on the Grouard Trail north from Edmonton where they spent seven weeks fighting mud, mosquitoes, bulldogs, and black flies on the 500 mile journey. They finally arrived at Flying Shot, which at that time, was the only settlement on the east part of Grande Prairie. Here they wintered in a tent and a partial dug-out. On the 8th of July, 1910, John Markus Hardin filed on the N.W. 17-72-5-W on the south east corner of Big Twin Lakes (afterwards called Clairmont Lake.) He cut fire-killed spruce logs in the Burnt Hills, twenty-five miles north and hauled them home and built a stopping-place on the Trail that went past his land.

In February of 1912, Mr. Hardin took three, four horse sleighs to Edmonton to bring home a "horse powered" threshing machine. He drove one sleigh while Nora, 12 years of age, drove another and Odie, 10, drove the third outfit. It became bitterly cold on the trip and Mr. Hardin was forced to tie their teams to the back of each sleigh and they crawled into a warm sleeping robe on his sleigh as they continued on when the weather warmed up.

On the return trip, the weight was divided as evenly as possible on the sleighs although the separator was by far the heaviest load. When crossing Lesser Slave Lake, the ice was melting in the sun's rays and upon nearing the shore line, it was noted that there was a gap between the ice and the shore. Mr. Hardin whipped his teams into the water and got up the bank and Nora's teams did the same but Odie with the heavy load, was unable to make it and they had to put all the horses on his sleigh to rescue it. If the ice had been a little further from the bank, it could have been disastrous for the Hardin family.

On April 11, 1915, the Hardins suffered a serious loss when their two year old son, Orville Elmer, died accidentally and was buried in one of the early plots of the "Flying Shot" cemetery — now the Grande Prairie cemetery. (His name, date of birth and death, are still plainly inscribed on his tombstone.)

Three years later they sold their homestead and moved northwest of Dawson Creek where they acquired a large plot of land and went into the cattle business until 1921, when they left again for the United States.

In the summer of 1975, the Old Timers of the area were delighted to see Ila and her husband, Ralph Fairbanks, come back to see her old stamping place of sixty-five years ago. Mr. and Mrs. Fairbanks remained in the district several weeks, during which time they looked up the old Hardin place on Clairmont Lake and also in Dawson Creek where they found many of the old buildings were still in good shape. The Fairbanks were wonderful ambassadors from our neighboring country to the south.

Odie Hardin became a very successful cattle rancher in Oregon where he and his family still reside. The Fairbanks live in California.

MR. AND MRS. JOHN HAWORTH — by Dick Haworth — January, 1977

My Father was born in Blackburn, England, January 4, 1891. He grew up and took his schooling in this part.



Fred Large (Grandfather).

In 1914, he joined the British Imperial Army and served in France, until being wounded in action in 1916. After the war, he was employed with the county (or local council as termed then) as a maintenance worker. Following this, he worked for a dairy farmer for a number of years.

On October 10th, 1925 he married Florence Elizabeth Large, a registered nurse, from Bristol General Hospital. Not completely satisfied with life, as it was then in Britain, and both being young and adventurous, they bought steam ship tickets to Halifax, Canada and 11 months later arrived on Canadian soil.

With limited funds, they purchased a rail ticket to Western Canada, and arrived in Calgary, in the late fall. With funds depleted, they both found work for the winter. Mother found employment, in the Calgary Holy Cross Hospital and Father went to work on a dray outfit. Next spring, hearing of what a great part of the country the Peace River area was, Dad headed northward, and came to Grande Prairie by rail. By grapevine, he heard of a quarter section of land for sale in the Bezanson district. The Jack Peshel family had been burned out, and were selling what was left.

Father made arrangements to purchase, (S.W. 31-71-2 W6) and wired Mother, that they had a new home, and there began a way of life they knew very little about, but were eager to learn.

The house which was to be their home, was of log construction and moved from a nearby farm. It was hastily torn apart, moved and rebuilt. How cold it was in winter, I remember well, but Dad and Mom being of young spirit and rich blood, became adapted to it, and the severity of northern winters. Farming was a struggle for many, in those times, and they were unknowingly entering into what many old timers called the "dirty thirties". A sequence of time where the next meal came from, was unknown.

During the start of this depression, my older and only sister Peggy was born. She arrived on September 9th, 1930.



Jack and Florence Haworth with friends, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Crummy.

Shortly after this event, my mother's father, Fred Large came to Canada, to see his daughter and new granddaughter and with him came his youngest daughter, Mabel. This visit was extended some time, and was to be the eternal resting place for both of them and also for Peggy, who was to have only a very short stay. She passed away on May 21st, 1931 at the age of 10 months.

I came into this world on April 2nd, 1932, and 8 months later, on December 21st, 1932, my grandfather passed away and was laid to rest, beside granddaughter Peggy in the Glen Leslie cemetery. He was 69 years old.

Auntie Mabel married Cliff Burbee, and one daughter, Eileen was born. On February 22nd, 1936 Auntie passed away, at the age of 25 years. Eileen is now Mrs. Henry Funk and resides at Lymburn, Alberta.

During the 1930's times were tough, and crops were poor, and as a result Mother went to work at her old

profession and was employed at the hospital in Pouce Coupe, B.C., on and off for several years. Some of this time I was farmed out and lived at our neighbours place, a Mr. and Mrs. Fred Dewhirst. These people were like an Aunt and Uncle to me. In the 1940's things became somewhat better and Mother was home again. She did keep her profession active, tending to the sick and needy of the community, even being midwife on an occasion or two. In May of 1951, Mother returned to England for a visit to see sisters and brothers, that she hadn't seen for many years. On January 30, 1952, after a lengthy heart ailment, she quietly passed away at home. She rests in the Glen Leslie Cemetery.

Father and I continued to farm. I purchased another quarter of land, and until 1960 lived there. I still have this land and it is rented. Dad lived on the farm until 1972, when he took up residence in Big Valley, Alberta for 3 years. This is where my wife Dianne and I, and our 2 daughters Beth and Joyce were living too. From there Father moved to the Golden Hills Lodge at Three Hills, Alberta. He passed away in the Trochu Hospital, on July 20, 1976. He was brought back to be buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery with his wife, daughter and father-in-law and sister-in-law.

My wife Dianne and 2 daughters and I (Dick) live at Trochul, Alberta. I 'm employed by Gulf Oil of Canada as a Battery Operator.



Jack with his faithful team of horses.

Going back to earlier years, as I remember, our drinking water was hauled by horses pulling a stoneboat and barrel from a spring in a coulee on the river bank, about a mile distant. In winter time, we melted snow, for our own use, and also for the livestock. This chore lasted a good many years.

Fuel for heating purposes was in good supply, either green poplar cut and cured or quite often dry poplar trees. A good part of the winter was spent getting the year's wood supply.

Food was obtained from almost everything, from wild berries, picked and canned to wild meat, and plenty of garden supply. We used blueberries, saskatoons, chokecherries, wild currants, cranberries, raspberries, etc. For meat it was deer, moose and even bush rabbits, that at times were quite tasty, in stew or pie. In those days rabbits were very plentiful. We would have hay and bundle stacks in the yard, and the rabbits would eat so much that they mushroomed the stacks until they fell over. I've killed many, armed with only a stick or frozen horse manure.

I have many fond memories of my school days. I went to the Bezanson school when it was located on the Johnston farm. For 9 years I walked one mile across country to reach the halls of learning.

I didn't particularly like school, but stuck it out, until I was old enough to quit. Some teachers I remember were Miss Billie Ulmer, Kathleen Burgess, Martha Knecktel, Marion McNaught, Mrs. Grace Ferris, Laura Berg, Mrs. Phyllis Stewart and Jean McLaughlin as a supervisor. I'm sure that my classmates would agree with me, to say that a book could be written on our school days, and every chapter more exciting. By the way girls, "What became of those notes us fellows used to write to you, during class?"

Our closest post office and store was at the hamlet of Bezanson.

Some games I remember from school were; Darebase, Fox and Goose, Auntie "I" Over and of course Post Office and who remembers Cave digging on Charlie Stewart's hillside?

I enjoyed all sports and have ribbons and crests from track and field. Enjoyed softball and in later years played baseball with the Bezanson Tigers for a number of years.

My hobbies were fishing, hunting and swimming.

Horses were the main means of getting around and of course on foot. There were a few cars in the area that I remember in the 30's; Cecil Allen — a Model A Ford, Fred Dewhirst — a 1928 Chrysler, Henry Tripp owned a 1926 Star and Bill Hall had a 1929 Chev. Truck.

HOWARD HENRY FAMILY STORY — by Mary Henry — January 14, 1977

Howard was born in Ontario, then lived at Bon Accord, Alberta. I, (Mary) was born at Clover Bar, moved to Hanna, Alberta (when I was 4 years old) with my family. After we were married we rented a farm at Mayerthorpe, Alberta for 1 year before coming to the Grande Prairie area. We were married in 1926.

Howard and I came to the Grande Prairie country in 1927. That summer we both worked for Bill Drynan, 2 miles east of Grande Prairie. In September, Howard went stooking for Charlie Moon and I went to work for Mrs. Bill Ford at Bezanson. In the meantime we acquired a quarter section of land south of where Cecil Allen now lives (N.E. 19-71-2 W6). When the fall work was done we went there to live. There was a log shack there and with some chinking and white wash, it was comfortable. We had bought some horses, a cow, a wagon and sleigh. I am not sure if it was the first or second winter we were there, that Howard cut wood for 3



Howard, Edith, Bill and Mary Henry by their home, 1941.

schools; Lindsay, Glen Leslie and Bezanson. There wasn't much land broke on that quarter section when we got it, but we managed to get a little more cleared and broke.

In 1931 we had a daughter called her Edith. Later that year we moved to Goodwin, Alberta. In 1932 we had a son named Bill.

Edith married Gerald Ungstad of Goodwin. They had 3 sons. Gerald died in 1959. She lives in Grande Prairie, Alberta and works at the Herald Tribune.

Bill married and lives at Lloydminister, Alberta. They have 4 children. Bill is a chemical engineer for Husky Oil.

Howard and I moved to Grande Prairie December 2nd, 1967. Howard got ill and went to live in the Swanhaven Nursing Home, staying there until he died November 19, 1973. I went to live at the Aurora Court (Senior Citizen home suites) in Grande Prairie, July 1st, 1973. This is my home now. (1977).

ALEX HERMASTIEN

Alex bought the (N.E. 2-72-3 W6) from Mr. John Henry Arnold who had homesteaded it in 1911. Alex also lived on the (N.E. 6-72-2 W6 across the road from Sam Hunters. He worked for Ira McLaughlin, much of the time after they came to Bezanson in 1928 and they farmed his land. Elmer McLaughlin bought the (N.E. 6-72-3 W6) in 1942. He and June (Ferris) were married and lived there for a number of years.

JAMES HUGHSON AND FAMILY — by Ruth Thorpe — February, 1977

My father, James Hughson was born in Cornhill, New Brunswick, April 9, 1880. He came west on a couple of harvest excursions and decided to stay, about 1911.

He homesteaded 14 miles south of Veteran, turning the first sods with oxen and building a first home of sod.

In 1913 he married Emily Orilla Hazetton, a young school teacher from Minnesota, U.S.A. Here Roy, Ruth, Alberta and Owen were born.

When the drought came to southern Alberta in the '20s Dad looked for greener pastures. November, 1928 saw our family in a 1927 Ford Touring car, headed for Grande Prairie, Alberta. When arriving at Athabasca we learned the ferry crossing at Smith was closed, so Dad and Roy took employment here and we stayed until April, 1930, when again we headed for Grande Prairie. There was no gravel on the highways and ferrys were not in operation and this trip lasted 2 weeks.



On the way to Sturgeon Lake in back of a truck. Clara Stewart, Irene Johnston, Ruth Hughson, Marion Ferris, Mildred and Myrtle Jensen, Vera Johnson, Elmer McLaughlin and others.

On arriving in Grande Prairie we stayed in the Immigration Hall, while Dad and Mother sought a location.

They became acquainted with Norman Moon and contracted a land clearing job through him. We moved into a log house, and this was to be a home for us for over a year. The summer was lovely and mother grew a grand garden and canned much. Also the blueberries and raspberries were in abundance. They moved some buildings onto a quarter south of here and Dad worked for Pete Moon.

Alberta, Owen and I went to school at the Bezanson School. Roy attended high school in the Bezanson Hall.

In 1932 Dad moved us onto the homestead of Norman Moon at Debolt and began to improve his own homestead here. He resided here at Debolt, Alberta until his death in October, 1965.

Roy completed his high school and normal in Edmonton. He married Isobel Hughes and raised a family of 2 boys and 3 girls. He now resides in Calgary and is employed with the Credit Union.

Alberta married Pete Knox and raised a family of 5 girls and 1 boy. She still resides in Debolt.

Owen married Monica Berry while overseas. They returned here and raised a family of 5 girls and 1 boy. Owen is in real estate at Parksville, B.C.

I married Garfield Thorpe and have 2 girls and 3 boys. We reside on our farm at Debolt.

Mother, in her 80s maintains her own home at Mayerthorpe, Alberta.

NATHANIEL HUNTER STORY — January, 1977

Nat was born in Ontario in 1896. He had a brother Samuel. Nat, Bill Kennedy and Alf Moon all went to school together in Edmonton in the early 1900s. Nat had an urge to travel and see the "west". He first filed on a quarter section of land near Grimshaw, Alberta on the north side of Peace River. In 1916 he came to

Bezanson, Alberta and filed on another homestead (S.E. 2-72-3 W6). He built a log house and barn on the northeast corner of his quarter. He had some cattle. In 1917 his brother Sam and wife Hazel came and homesteaded in Bezanson too. They only lived about a mile from him. However war threatened our country and in October, 1917 he enlisted but it was spring before he went overseas (1918) along with a good friend of his, Alf Moon. In July, 1919 — they came back to Canada from World War I to Glen Leslie or Bezanson as it is now called and started farming. Alf Moon related how they used to go down the Smoky River and on up to McLennan and catch the train there, ride the freights out for harvest in southern Alberta. Nat took a soldiers' grant — N.W. 6-72-3 W6, after the war and now had 2 quarter sections of land to farm. He was a real good neighbour and everyone's friend. Later he bought the "Totten" place (S.W. 2-72-4 W6). He married Mabel (Robideau) Whalen — a widow with 2 children — Eunice and Bobby.

I (Mabel) was born in Alberta, Minnesota, U.S.A. — August 7, 1902. I lived at home and went to school there until 1917 when I came tc Canada (Bezanson, Alberta) with my parents (Peter and Sophia Robideau and my brothers and sisters.) I was married and later divorced. I had 2 children Eunice (1922) and Bobby (1924). They started to school at Lindsay.

On October 25, 1933 I married Nat Hunter and we all went to live at Glen Leslie, Alberta on Nat's farm. Bobby and Eunice went to school at Glen Leslie and and Bobby took his grade 9 at Crystal Creek. Then they went to a high school, which was built about a mile west of the Bezanson village for a few years.

When we lived at Glen Leslie we had card parties (played bridge) once a week in each others homes; ours (Nat Hunters), Herman Kimbles, Jack McFetridges, and Pete Donnahues. We had a ladies club called the "Cheerful Companions". There was quite a number of ladies belonged to this. We had bazaars, tea parties, card parties, etc., anything to raise money for charitable organizations such as the Red Cross.

In 1941 Bob joined the Army and went overseas in World War II. He was there until it was over in 1945 and then stayed on 1 more year.

Eunice went to Edmonton to find work. She was a receptionist for a Dr. Gray M.D., until 1944 when she married Ken Arkley in Calgary, Alberta. They had 4 children — Judy (1945), Patricia (1947), Susan (1948) and Mary (1952). When their youngest girl was only 6 years, Eunice died after an extended illness in 1958.

In 1950 Bob married a Crystal Creek, Alberta girl — Nancy Boyd (daughter of Elsie and Hugh Boyd). They had 7 children; Gregory (1953), Gordon (1955), Debbie (1956), Dianne (1957), Jamie (1960), Beverley (1961) and Jo-Ann (1966). Bob and Nancy and family live in Edmonton, Alberta.

Nat and I lived at Glen Leslie for 10 years, then sold the farm to Steve Garrett of Glen Leslie and we went to Kelowna, B.C. for the winter. In the spring of 1944 we bought some land on the outskirts of Grande Prairie (southwest of the city.) We lived there 12 years until Nat passed away in 1956. He's buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery. I lived on there until I was able to sell the farm, then I bought 2 lots at the Bezanson village and Bob (my son) built me a house. I am still here (January, 1977).

SAMUEL HUNTER STORY — by Pamelia (Hunter) Tissington

Samuel was born at Rockton, Ontario in 1885, later moving to Cloverdale, B.C. He met and married Hazeldean Sanderson who was born May 17, 1895, in Listowel, Ontario. She was staying with her aunt in B.C. when she met her husband. They were married at New Westminister in 1916 and came north on one of the first trains to Grande Prairie. (Sam's brother Nat was in the North and had written glowingly of its future.)

Their trip to the homestead at Bezanson (N.W.¼ of 2-72-3 W6) was in a lumber wagon over a winding trail in the pouring rain. Having just come from B.C., they were equipped with an umbrella.



Sam and Hazel Hunter married Feb. 1, 1916.

They came to a small log cabin and were welcomed by the tantalizing aroma of wild duck roasting. It had been prepared by Sam's brother Nat and Bill Kennedy, and gave the weary travellers a lift.

The earlier years were very trying with the loss of their first child and the hardships of pioneer life. Neighbours although few and far apart, were always close when trouble struck. The doctor was 24 miles away so Grandma Moon (Elizabeth) delivered many of the district babies. Later years the beloved Dr. O'Brien would make his rounds with his horse and buggy. Sam and Hazel had the store and post office for

a time, but Sam was not a storekeeper. He found selling fine, but collecting distasteful.

In 1927, the family moved to what became their home quarter (N.W.¼ 1-72-3 W6) to a substantial two storey log home, built by Nels Meyers. (It is still in use, after remodelling, as a manse for the interdenominational minister serving Bezanson.)

The family had now grown to 4: Eileen the eldest born 1918; Mary Alice born 1923; Robert born 1925; and Pamelia 1927. They are pictured in front of the new Chrysler car which was to continue its usefullness for the next 20 years. It played an important role in those early days when emergencies arose and cars were not plentiful. Of course it couldn't replace the team and buggy or sleigh for much of the year.



Post office at Sam Hunter's at Bezanson, 1926.

The church played an important part in the life of the Hunters. In early years it was held in various homes; the Bezanson Community Hall and later the Glen Leslie Church. Mr. Ed Peckham led the service for many years until ordained ministers travelled from Grande Prairie. The Sabbath, eagerly awaited by the young, was not only informal worship, but often ended with lunch and games. I recall with pleasure the frequent large gatherings at the Rex Patterson home on Sundays and the abundant table always prepared in readiness by Mrs. Rex (Grace) Patterson.

Sing-songs were a favorite of hers too, and the evening would find a group gathered as she accompanied them on the piano. People had time to visit and did. So many happy memories are recalled; the frequent visits to the Macs (McLaughlins) the Starks, the Moons . . . the deer hunts Bill Hall took us on, and the tender nursing care given by Mrs. Jack Haworth. It was a wonderful era in which to be young!

Bezanson School, the other main center of community life, seriously tried to mold us and surprisingly, probably did! Many of the teachers boarded at the Hunters; which held mixed blessings. You knew them well, so were less fearful, but they also knew you well which wasn't always to your advantage. The 3R's were stressed and any teacher not doing so came under the scrutiny of the local school board. Sam took his turn serving on this board as well as most of the other fathers in the district.

'Ladies Aid' as they called themselves figured prominently in the life of the women in the district. It



Hunter Family going to church. Mary, Eileen and Pam in back seat. Sam, Bob and Hazel in front. Pat McNally — standing.

was amazing how many would gather for monthly meetings. Most women were able to handle a team, and sometimes several young children as well.

Later the Agnes Forbes Auxiliary Church Group had a membership of 15 plus. Hazel's secretarial records provide some interesting notations; Fowl supper — 40c for adults; 20c for children; todays collection — 35c. Membership roll call listing surnames; Ames, Moon, Mitchell, Patterson, Wales, Nelson, Allen, Ferris, Nichols, McLaughlin, Weegar, Ford, Leslie, Thompson and Jensen.

Tragedy struck the Hunter family in 1939, when Eileen died following an operation. She had just completed Normal School and had been anticipating her appointment to teach at Pipestone Creek School that fall.



Hunter Family 1939. Hazel, Pam, Eileen, Bob, Mary and Sam.

In 1951, Sam and Hazel semi-retired to Grande Prairie, still returning to the farm in the spring and fall. Sam passed away in 1958 at the age of 73 and Hazel in September, 1976 at 81 years.

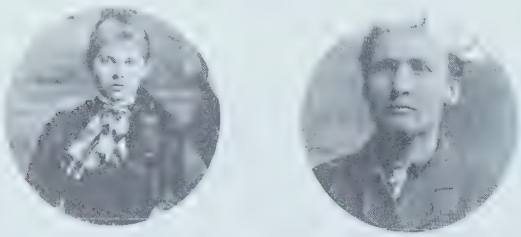
Mary Alice (Sebastian) lives on a farm near Dimsdale, with her husband George. They spend their summers in the North and their winters in Vernon, B.C. Their only son Tim (born 1955) is attending the University of Alberta where he is taking Education.

Robert is still farming in the Bezanson district and has the original home quarter. He married Eleanor Wig from Eastend, Saskatchewan and they have 2 children; Glenda (born 1963) and Douglas (born 1964), both attending junior school at Sexsmith.

Pamelia (Tissington) lives on a farm with her husband Jim at Flying-Shot Lake. They have 4 sons; Sam (born 1950) married Janice Crough of Grande Prairie and they have 2 boys, Jason (1972) and Trevor (1975). Ivan (born 1951) married Sandra Penson of Grovedale and they have 2 children; Trina born 1970 and Shawn born 1972. Both boys, Sam and Ivan, are in business in Grande Prairie. Stanley (born 1955) and Dean (born 1963) remain at home. Stanley is farming and livestock hauling. Dean is in junior high at Harry Balfour School at Grande Prairie, Alberta.

DAVE JOHNSON STORY — by Dorothy (Johnston) Doerkson — 1976

Dave Johnston's wife, Jane Ann Bell, died in 1907. Dave moved his family, consisting of 6 sons; Norman, Willis, Charles, Elmer and Ralph and 2 daughters, Elizabeth and Manetta from Sault Ste. Marie in Ontario in 1911 to Edmonton, Alberta. He and his sons, with 4 up teams of horses, hauled material from the south side of the North Saskatchewan River to the site of the Parliament Buildings for the construction of their buildings.



Dave and Jane Ann (Bell) Johnston. (Grandparents of Willis Jr.)

Upon the advice of the Moon brothers about the Bezanson area, they filed on land by proxy, consisting of; Dave (1911) S.W. 26-71-3 W6, Earl (1912) N.W. 26-71-3 W6, Willis (1912) S.E. 26-71-3 W6, Charles (1912) N.E. 26-71-3 W6, Elmer (1912) S.W. 35-71-3 W6, Norman (1914) N.W. 35-71-3 W6.

They moved to Bezanson in 1912, where they broke up a lot of land. World War I broke out and 4 of the boys; Willis, Charles, Norman and Earl went overseas. Elmer received an Applied and Rejected button due to poor eye sight. Ralph being too young, stayed home to help on the farm. Norman was held prisoner of war in Germany for a number of years, after which he returned to Edmonton and worked as a plain clothes detective until his death in 1941.

Willis, after being wounded 4 times, died of the flu in 1918 and is buried in Kourtdrake, Belgium.



Charles (standing) and Willis Sr. Johnston WWI.

After the war, Earl and Elmer left Bezanson and served on the Edmonton fire department for many years. From there they moved to Los Angeles, Calfironia, U.S.A., where Earl passed away. Elmer is presently still living there. Ralph, who stayed to help farm, died in 1922 and is buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery.

In 1917, Elizabeth and Manetta went to Toronto, Ontario where Elizabeth married Will Lowry. After the death of her husband, she returned with brother Charles to Bezanson for a visit and died in the Grande Prairie Hospital in 1950, and is buried in Toronto. Elizabeth was the first secretary of the Glen Leslie Church.

Manetta went to school at the Presbyterian Church at the top of the Smoky River Hill above the Bezanson townsite. She married Jack Lowe in 1929 and passed away some years later, and is buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery.

CHARLIE JOHNSTON STORY — by Dorothy (Johnston) Doerkson — 1976

Charles, returning from overseas service, met Marie Steffen (widow) accompanied by her two children, Albert Julius (Pudge) and Irene. After a short courtship they married and stopped at Calgary, Alberta, where he was employed at the Sanatarium for approximately three years. During this time, Dorothy (1920) and Willis (1921) were born. He moved his family to his first homestead in Bezanson in 1923 where he

purchased the homestead of Doc Labidy (N.W. 25-71-3 W6) and resided there until 1947 when his land was purchased by his son Willis through the Veteran's Land Act. Marie Johnston left for Spokane, Washington, U.S.A. in 1935 followed by her 2 oldest children. She passed away in 1964 and is buried in Spokane, Washington.



Wanda, Charlie, Marie, Elmer, Vivian and Willis Johnston, 1954.

After spending 3 years in Toronto, Ontario my father returned to the Goodwin area, where he again homesteaded on the W.½ 5-73-1 W6 where he lived until his death in 1966.

I, Dorothy, married John Doerkson of Goodwin in 1941 and had two girls; Elizabeth (1941) and Elsie (1946). In 1949, we moved to Debolt where we are presently engaged in a farming operation.



Wanda (Johnston) Zenner and sons Craig and Darren.



Dorothy (Johnston) and John Doerkson.

Elizabeth married Robert Scott in 1961, and are presently living in Clarkson Valley with their family of David (1961), Gary (1964) and Judy (1972.)

Elsie married Wayne Giesbrecht in 1968, and are presently living in Grande Prairie, Alberta with their family of 2 girls; Carrie (1968) and Edi (1970).



Charles and Willis Johnston, Albert Steffen, John Doerkson.

Brother Willis married Vivian Nelson in 1947 and lived in Grande Prairie for 3 years where a daughter, Wanda was born in 1950. From there they moved to the farm in Bezanson in 1952.
Wanda married Tom Zenner of Debolt in 1969 and lived in Grande Prairie for 2 years, returning to the Bezanson school site (N.W. 25-71-3 W6) where they built their house, where the Bezanson school sat some 20 odd years ago. (The same school where Willis and I (Dorothy) completed our education).



Willis Johnston Jr. WW2.

Tom and Wanda have 2 boys — Daren (1971) and Craig (1975).

Vivian Johnston passed away in 1974 and is buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery. Willis still resides on the farm at Bezanson.

ANGUS KENNEDY

Angus was a railroad man and worked around Winnipeg, Manitoba. During the summer he spent time with a good friend, Oliver Menard of Bezanson. He bought the S.W. 6-72-2-W6) one summer and then sold half of it to Oliver for the price he had paid for the whole thing.

WILLIAM H. (BILL) KENNEDY

Bill was born in Port Elgin, Ontario in 1896. He came to Edmonton, Alberta with his family in 1904. Gladys Moon was his sister. In 1914, he came to Bezanson, Alberta where he homesteaded (N.W. 34-71-3-W6). He built a small, sod roof house. When he was at home, he had lots of company — bachelors that is. He raised sheep and had a pasture fenced for them. In this way he proved his homestead and also broke land.

He then mortgaged the place to buy a number of sheep, but went broke and the bank took his land. After that, he left to go to Brownvale, Alberta.

Rex Patterson, a near neighbour, bought this land from the bank for $1000.00 but the bank was cagey and wouldn't let him pay cash — only $100.00 a year. By the time the land was paid for, the Bank had doubled the initial price!

Before Bill left Bezanson, he donated one acre of land, at the northwest corner of his place, to the community so there would be a spot to build a hall. They did so in 1923. When there was only a floor and 3 logs high for walls; a dance was held with Ernie Ford playing the violin and Bill the mouth organ or jewsharp for music.

From Brownvale, after a short time, he went to McLennan, Alberta. He married Florence Stewart (George Stewart's daughter from Bezanson in 1924. He met her on a trip to Detroit, Michigan when he was visiting Jack and Hilda Mitchell, friends from Bezanson, who were living there at the time.

They have 3 children; Helen (Mrs. Henry Dodds of Taylor, B.C.), Kenneth of Edmonton, Alberta, and Jim of Taylor, B.C.

His wife Florence died a number of years before Bill. Bill worked for the Northern Alberta Railway for years. When he retired he lived in Brownvale again for a short time, then in Fairview, Alberta. He made many trips back to Bezanson to visit friends and relatives.

He died at the Peace River Auxiliary hospital at the age of 72 in 1968.

MR. JAMES LABADIE (DOC.)

James homesteaded in 1912 in Bezanson (N.W. 25-71-3-W6.) He got himself a catalogue bride, a nurse,



'Doc' James Labadie.

Miss Grant. He had come from Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A. In 1923, he sold his land to Charlie Johnston and went back to the U.S.A.

JOSEPH LOWE SR. STORY — by son Jack, April, 1976

Dad was born in Prince Edward Island in 1870. He married my mother Dorcas Letitia Grant (Letty) who was also born in Prince Edward Island in 1874.

My dad had two brothers, John and Dave; and 3 sisters — Belle, Margaret and Fanny.

My mother had four sisters; Mary, Libby, Catherine and Emily, and one brother Simon.

My dad and mother had two daughters, Emily and Ethel, and 2 sons, Grant and myself (Jack). We lived on a farm one mile from Murray River, Prince Edward Island.



Grant with his steel wheel tractor for breaking land.

Besides farming my dad was a carpenter.

I quit school at the early age of 14 years and grew up quickly so as to help the family. My sisters and brothers went on through high school. I did most of the farming while father did carpenter work to help supply money for us to live. I also learned to be a carpenter's helper. By using a hand rip-saw, I sawed all the lumber for the eaves of our big house which dad had built but never finished.

Dad's brother Uncle John was farming Grandpa's place and when he died we had that farm work to do too.

My mother's sister, Aunt Catherine married Pete Moon and went out west to Alberta in 1913, settling in Bezanson. In 1918 she and baby son Billy came home on a visit. She talked a lot about the west, how well she liked it, and this influenced me to go out there a couple of years later.

In 1919 and again in 1920 from mid April to mid June, I went lobster fishing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, working for a company who supplied fish for a factory where 60 girls worked.

Sisters Emily and Ethel had both gone to Winnipeg and had taken business courses. Emily came home for a visit. She took the flu and at the age of 24 she died. Ethel later married Herb McLachlin and lived in Edmonton.

In the fall, I had the urge to go out and see the west. A harvest excursion was made up of around 600 men from Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Cape Bretton to go west where men were needed to help take off the crops.

All went well until we got into Quebec — no prohibition there — so lots of liquor was bought and taken on board the train. At every stop in Quebec damage was done, wrecked telegraph stations, raided restaurants — they really went wild — broke seats and windows in the train. At last the train stopped and all the trainmen got off and quit except the engineer and fireman. For 3 days we had no water to drink except for some we could get out of the ditches by the way. We all had lots of food with us. After we got into Ontario there was no more trouble, but there was no one to keep the train clean and so it got in an awful mess. Our tickets were to Winnipeg, Manitoba but when we got there — 6 of us Prince Edward Islanders went on to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. Along the way the train had been stopping at every station. There would be farmers waiting there wanting so many men to help. Another fellow and I went to work for Jack Reece. We helped cut some oats, did some stooking. I hauled grain with a tandum 4 up of horses and then went threshing with Jack's team and wagon. The next fall in 1921, I went to visit Uncle Pete Moon. I worked for Norman and Pete from 1921-22. We hauled wheat all winter. In 1922, after the crop was in, I went to work for Johnny Kebalo. We broke land with six horses all summer. In haying time, I went across the Smoky River, north of Goodwin, and put up 80 tons of hay for his cattle. I ran out of grub and so walked all the way back to Johnny's place, got a sack of grub and walked back. After harvest, we built a cattle barn, and also a house for Johnny to live in. I shot partridge for meat as they were plentiful.



Jack Lowe and Manetta — Herb and Ethel McLachlin.

In the spring of 1924, I bought Bob Moon's homestead (S.E. 27-71-3-W6). Pete and Norman put my crop in both springs — 1924-25. Aunt Catherine gave me a horse and I bought one from a pound sale. This was my beginning of farming in Bezanson. We had fair crops of wheat.

I went to the Buffalo Lakes lumber camp and worked the winters of 1923 and 1924; working for half lumber and half cash. Lumber was worth between $25 and $30 a thousand board feet.

In 1925, I bought some used machinery from a farm sale and also another team of horses. In the fall of 1925, Alf Moon had a contract to haul ties around Buffalo Lakes — 4 miles to a siding. Myrtle and baby Alice came along. Myrtle did the cooking and what a wonderful cook she was! We finished hauling ties early so we went to the bush. I hauled logs into the mill and Alf hauled the lumber to the siding. In the fall of 1926, I took a team of Rex Patterson's to haul logs with. I earned enough lumber to later build my house. By March 17, 1926 the snow was all gone and the roads were dusty. Ross Wales and Norman Moon had a contract to build Soldier Settlement houses. Charlie Moon, Ross and I built the two houses later that spring that Jack and Jim Stark moved into. Then Ross and I fixed over a log house, once belonging to Frenchie La Rue. After we had spent three days scrubbing and cleaning the house, we sided it with lumber. This house was later lived in by another English family, the Burrows.

In the spring of 1926, brother Grant came up to visit us and stayed. I had one-quarter and was renting some. Then, I went back for a visit to Prince Edward Island and Grant looked after things for me.

In 1927 and 1928 we had fair crops. In the fall Manetta Johnston came for a visit.

In 1930 my parents came west. Sister Ethel and husband Herb McLachlin drove down to Prince Edward Island — helped my parents with sale and brought them back. They stayed. My father died in 1943 at the age of 73 years. Mother lived until 1960. They are both buried at Glen Leslie. My brother died with cancer in 1938 at the age of 35 years.

JOHN LOWE STORY — by Jack — April, 1976

I was born at Murray River, Prince Edward Island on March 7, 1901. I married Manetta Johnston, May 31, 1929. She was born at Sault Ste. Marie — 1903, the youngest daughter of Dave and Jane (Bell) Johnston. A son, Joe, was born in June, 1930 and another son, Herbert Earl, was born May 10, 1934. They both went to school at Bezanson.

Times were hard during the 30's but we always had lots to eat, as we raised good gardens, had pigs and cattle and shot a few moose. Our sisters sent good clothes that Manetta made over for the children.

In 1931, I remember buying a sow pig. She raised 14 piglets. In the fall I kept 3 young sows so we could raise more and sold the other 11. I hauled the 11 pigs to Clairmont and received $33.00 (total for 11) — 1½c per pound.

In the winter of 1929, Alf Moon had a contract for hauling lumber from Cook's mill to Glen Leslie, across the road from Bryenton's store. I stayed down at the mill and Bert Ogden and Alf Moon stayed at Alf's



Jack and Manetta and son, Joseph, 1930.

place, and did the hauling. We hauled lumber every day even when the temperature was 50 degrees below zero and that was most every day in the month of February.

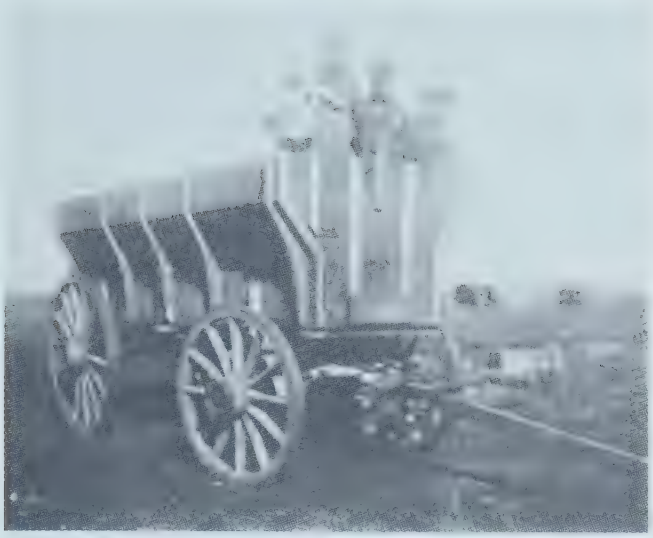
In 1937, Grant (my brother) and Arnold Christie bought a steel wheel tractor and we broke a lot of land. In 1945, we sold all our land to Jack Moon (son of Pete Moon).

We rented Charlie Moon's place for 3 years, as Charlie and family were at Sturgeon Heights running a lumber mill.

In 1948, we moved to Grande Prairie — buying Dan Minchin's house and 7 lots. We kept renting and far-



Jack in 1919.



Means of hauling grain — 1919.

ming land until 1952, when we sold all our machinery. Manetta had a stroke in 1950 and was in hospital for 5 months.

From 1952-68, I worked for the Alberta Wheat Pool and Alberta Seed Growers. Manetta died in 1964 and is buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery. Herbert Earl was married and living in Dawson Creek, B.C. In 1968 I built a small house in his yard and lived there until 1973. I lived in a Senior Citizens Home in Dawson Creek for about a year, then moved back to Grande Prairie. I lived with a cousin, Mary Moon and her friend Jean Dykes until Herb and family moved back to Grande Prairie. I lived with them until January 6, 1975 when I went to Pioneer Lodge and from there to Heritage Lodge (next door) in February, 1976. Here I have a single room with bath and meals provided. I am very comfortable and well looked after.

JOSEPH JOHNSON LOWE JR. — March, 1977

I, Joe, eldest son of John and Manetta (Johnston) Lowe was born at the Grande Prairie hospital on June 2, 1930 and lived at Bezanson. I attended grade school at Bezanson (No. 3302) from 1937-44. During 1944-45, I lived with Libby and Arnold Christie and finished my elementary grades and then took my high school at Grande Prairie, living at the Dorm for a couple of years until my folks moved to Grande Prairie.

In 1950, I worked at Motor Car Supply and in 1951 at Armada Petroleum. On April 18, 1953, I married Terry Langlois of St. George, Manitoba in Edmonton, Alberta. We had 1 daughter Robin Lynda, born August 5, 1954.

From 1953-55, I worked for Edmonton Transit. I returned to Grande Prairie in 1955 while working for Haliburton Oil Well Cementing Co.

In 1957, I moved to Manitoba, where I drove for a number of Transport Co., both in Manitoba and Ontario. I returned to Edmonton in 1971.

In 1970, I married Arleen Ruoho of Nipigon, Ontario. We have 3 children; Deanna Arleen, Herbert Scott Arnold and Chrystal Anne.

We are presently living in Edmonton, hauling produce from California, U.S.A.

HERBERT EARL LOWE — March, 1977

I, Herb, second son of John and Manetta (Johnston) Lowe was born at the Grande Prairie Hospital on May 10, 1934 and lived at Bezanson.

I attended grade school at Bezanson (No. 3302) from 1940-48. My parents moved to Grande Prairie in 1948 and I took my high school there from 1948-51.

From 1951-53 I worked for Imperial Motors and Union Tractor in Grande Prairie. In the spring of 1953, I moved to Edmonton. I drove Canadian Coachways and Northern Freightways from 1953-56.



Herbert Earl, Grant, Keith, Sharon and Florence Lowe.

I married Florence Tauffenbach of Dawson Creek, daughter of Connie and Rose (Pelland) Tauffenbach on May 14, 1955. Florence was born on August 23, 1933 at St. Boniface, Manitoba and lived in Winnipeg until 1943 when her parents moved to Dawson Creek, B.C., during the construction of the Alaska Highway.

We were blessed with 3 children; 2 boys, Ronald Grant — September 13, 1956, and Keith Randall — August 7, 1958, and 1 daughter Sharon Helene — March 15, 1961.

Grant and Keith were born in Grande Prairie while living there from 1950-60 and Sharon in Dawson Creek, B.C. We had moved to B.C. in 1960 and lived there until 1974 when we returned to Grande Prairie. I am presently employed with Greyhound Lines.

CHARLIE LUPTON

Charlie (brother of John) homesteaded the N.W. 30-71-2-W6 in 1920 in the Bezanson area. He came from the U.S.A. Charlie was an oil man. He was with the oil business when oil was discovered at Leduc, Alberta. He married Della Colby. They adopted Hazel Shedeen and raised her as Hazel Lupton. She went to school at the little log Presbyterian Church at the top of the Hill (Smoky River) above the Bezanson Townsite. Hazel, later in 1924, married Ernie Ford.

JACK LUPTON

Jack (or John) homesteaded in the Bezanson area in 1919 the N.E. 30-71-2-W6. He and his brother Charlie and the Colbys all came into the country together in 1913. He took a second homestead on the east side of Kleskun Hill where he made his home. He remained a bachelor; a man of all jobs, a real joker, an Archie Bunker type! He died in 1948 and is buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery.

GERTRUDE MATTINSON — WOMAN VISITS AFTER LONG ABSENCE — June 28, 1968

Fond memories of Grande Prairie and people who lived here up to 50 years ago have been recalled by an American woman, presently spending a week in the city for the first time since 1923.

Mrs. Gertrude Mattinson, daughter of the late Percy Bezanson, is staying at the home of P. V. Croken, along with her aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Switzer of Edson.

"I knew the late Mrs. Daisy Croken when she just immigrated from Belgium, even before our marriages," begins Mrs. Mattinson, whose residence is in Los Angeles, U.S.A. "For a long time, I was her first and only girlfriend." And — that was a long time. She says, that before her father moved to what was the original Bezanson site, they lived in Edmonton for 1½ years.

"My uncles, Ralph and Maynard Bezanson, came here sometime around 1907 by dog team and our family followed in October, 1914. It took us 19 days to come over the Edson Trail through the mud and cold weather," she recalls.

At that time the Bezanson homestead was situated 7 miles northwest of the Smoky River Highway bridge. "We lived 3 winters at the homestead and one at the present locality of Bezanson. I went to school there for 3 years."

(Stressing the pronunciation of "Bezanson", she confirmed that it was a French name which should be said as Bez (awn) son".

But in 1917, the family of Percy Bezanson moved to the then town of Grande Prairie where Mrs. Mattinson took the rest of her education in the big, old, red Montrose School (now Montrose Elementary). After completing her education, she became employed in a drug store owned and operated by Jim James.

From there she worked at the post office nearly 2 years for the first postmaster here, Alf Leachman. She married Herb Mattinson on June 18, 1919. The wedding was held in the little old Presbyterian Church located next to the St. Paul's United Church.

"My husband was the first teller in the Union Bank of Canada and he also ran the projector in the first theatre."

Mr. Mattinson, who was a violinist, managed a 7 piece dance orchestra as well as a 17 piece concert orchestra, while his wife's hobby or favorite side line, was her keen horsemanship.

"I would get on any horse that a person dared me to ride. They never frightened me, not even the wild "broncos"."

Yet before leaving Grande Prairie in 1923, Mr. and Mrs. Mattinson had their 2 children born here — Shirley in 1921 and Wilton in 1922.

Asked why they travelled south, the visitor pointed out the main reason was due to the winters, "They were so very long and cold."

So they since settled in California and the only difference between the United States and Canada, besides the climate, she affirms, was the accent.

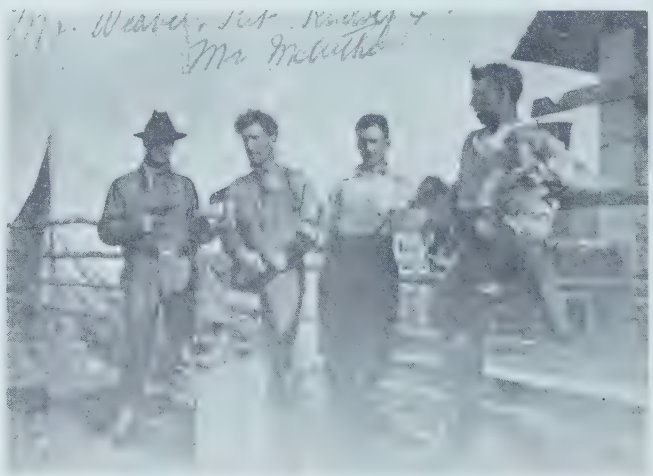
At Los Angeles, Mrs. Mattinson is presently director and secretary-treasurer of the Western Technology Inc. which produces Dynamil Chemical Etching machines and the National Technology Inc. Both firms are involved with the space prograim in the U.S.A.

LORNE E. McARTHUR — by Lorne — March 1, 1977

I arrived in Grande Prairie, Alberta with my parents in June, 1918. It took us seven days to come by railroad from Edmonton. In some places brush and poles had been put under the rails so the front wheels of the engine kept coming off the rails and had to be put back on.

We stayed with friends at Bear Lake for some time, also in the immigration hall. We then moved to Bezanson townsite and spent the winter of 1918-1919 there. I went to school for awhile, which was on top of the hill.

Also at Bezanson townsite that winter, were the Morrisons, P. V. Croken, the Carl Petersons and others I don't remember.



Sgt. Weaver, Pat Croken, Rudy Croken, and Mr. McArthur.

Then in the spring of 1919, we went on to Sturgeon Lake, where my father had homesteaded.

In 1928, Dad built a store in Debolt and I hauled freight, etc., from Grande Prairie. We bought a truck later, but at times we had to use the four horses and

the wagon to haul because of muddy roads. We also had the Smoky River to contend with, twice a year, as there was no bridge.

In 1937, I married Ada, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Lenes of Goodwin. We tried the store business for awhile, also farmed some. In 1940, I enlisted in the Army, was away for 5 years. We farmed some when I came back, then moved to Grande Prairie, where I worked for the plywood plant until I retired.

We raised 9 children and now have 8 grandchildren.

WILLIAM McGOWAN

William and his wife came to Bezanson in 1913 and homesteaded the N.W. 19-71-2-W6. Mrs. McGowan drove a team over the Edson Trail alongside her husband. Mr. McGowan hired Geord Hadway to break up his land for him, so he could prove up his homestead. He was well off financially and was very interested in the Bezanson Townsite, which they thought would come in time. They went back to Vashon, Washington, U.S.A., where their grown family were. Later a daughter "Hazel" came up to see the country in 1920. She stayed at Norman Moon's for a month. She was really enthused at the country and was the "Belle of Bezanson" while she was here, a real lovely girl.

JACK McKENZIE

Jack filed on a homestead by Johnny Kebalo's (S.E. 8-72-3-W6) in 1913. When World War I broke out he went. He came back after the war to Bezanson and sold his homestead to Johnny Kebalo and then leased a few acres of land from the Moon Bros., which had been owned by John Angus. He built a store on it (S.E. 33-71-3-W6) just west of where Ross Moon's house is now (1977). He married and they had one daughter Phyllis (October 1, 1921).

I remember they used to have a big phonograph (the kind you used thick records with a diamond needle, and you cranked it with a handle to wind it up.) There were shelves in the lower part of the cabinet and on the bottom shelf. Mrs. McKenzie always kept a cake. Once when I (Wauneita Patterson now Ogden) was about 5 or 6 years old, I asked her why she kept a cake in there and she replied, "So that the man on the record will sing for us" and I believed her.

They moved to Grande Prairie, Alberta. In March of 1925 my mother (Mrs. Rex Patterson) stayed with them when she had her last baby (Kenneth). All her babies had been born at home, but this time she was going to the hospital, but luck was against her, the hospital was quarantined for scarlet fever. She had Dr. L. J. O'Brien come to McKenzie's house.

Jack went into the real estate business in Grande Prairie, but I do not know where he went from there.

LOUIS McLAUGHLIN — by Louis — January 4, 1977

I was born October 2, 1899 in Prince Edward Island and lived there until I moved to Grenfell, Saskatchewan to go into partnership with my older brother Ira in 1914.

In 1928, we (Ira, his wife and 5 children and myself) came to Bezanson and bought a half section from "Bell" (Fanny Bell and her son Alfred had homesteaded here in 1914) being the N.E. one and the S.E. 12-72-3-W6. Later I bought the S.W. 6-72-2-W6 (east



Louis on the road work, moving camp with the new 'Cat'.

half of it) and S.E. 1-72-3-W6 from Angus Kennedy. This land had been homesteaded earlier by Knel Murphy Mitchell — in 1914 (½ sec. 6) and George Colby 1917 (¼ sec. 1).

Later I did road work (ran a caterpillar tractor — first one in Grande Prairie) under A. F. McQuarrie — Dept. of Public Works for a number of years. When the Grande Prairie County No. 1 was formed, I was hired to supervise the road work they would be doing.

After a time I moved to High Prairie, Alberta about 1956 where Bill Ferris and I had a garage and Massey Harris Implement business together. I was there for 8 or 10 years. Bill and wife (Grace Allen) were still living there when we sold out, Grace was teaching school.

Then I moved back to Grande Prairie, Alberta and went to work in the Park Hotel as night clerk. I boarded with a widow lady — Mrs. Mayer — for awhile and then bought my own house at 9605 - 102 St. in Grande Prairie. I continued to work here until 1976 when I retired. A new Senior Citizens Home "The Heritage Lodge" was opened in February, 1976. I sold my house and moved in there in April.

IRA AND NELLIE McLAUGHLIN

The McLaughlin family originated in Prince Edward Island and Ontario.

Ira was born in Charletown, Prince Edward Island, January 5, 1891, the first of eight children. At the age of fourteen he left home to begin making his own living and found work in a department store earning $5.00 a week in Lowell, Massachusetts. He began saving these meagre wages in the hope of getting to Western Canada and in time succeeded and went to Grenfell, Saskatchewan which was as far as his money would take him. His brother Louis came and joined him in renting a dairy farm one mile west of Grenfell.

There he met Nellie Currie who had come west from Ontario to keep house for Doctor Argue and care for his daughter who had had polio.

Nellie was born in Calabogie, Renfrew County, Ontario, on August 21, 1892, and was raised on a farm near Clayton, Ontario. She was the second eldest in a family of six and left school at a tender age of 12 when her Mother became ill.

In 1912, Ira and Nellie were married in Grenfell and continued to live on the dairy farm. Ira milked 20 to 32



Ira McLaughlin family. Back: Neil, Jean, Earl, Joan, Elmer. Front: Nellie, Ira and Helen.

cows by hand and delivered the milk to the residents in Grenfell. After two years their first son, Neil, was born and during the next fourteen years their family grew to five. Elmer was the second born, then Earl. Nine years later they had their first daughter, Jean, and then Joan. During that time Ira hauled his Holstein bull to the Fair in Regina and was rewarded by receiving the Championship.

In 1928, Ira and Nellie decided to move to the Peace River area to homestead. They filed on a homestead in Rolla, B.C. Nellie remained in Grenfell while Ira, three men to help with the move, Briggs, Robinson and Chappell, loaded their belongings in a boxcar. The second eldest son, Elmer, was also in the group, the reason being Nellie felt she could handle the rest of the family but due to high spirits, Elmer should accompany his Dad.

They loaded the wooden threshing machine in one boxcar, the old lizzie, a 1530 tractor, six cows and six horses in another. There was only one man allowed to accompany all this so when the train would stop and the conductor would come around to check, Ira hid them all under the car and covered them with hay. Somehow they managed to reach Grande Prairie without being discovered.

Ira's brother, Nelson, had come to the Grande Prairie area in 1916 and was homesteading at Bezanson. When Ira arrived Nelson managed to convince him he should go no farther so Ira took up farming at Bezanson.

Ira, Nelson, Louis, Charlie Brewer, Scotty Fitzsimmons and young Elmer spent most of that summer building a house with lumber purchased through Jerome Norton from the Fitzpatrick sawmill, north of Teepee Creek.

Nellie, their four other children and household items arrived sometime in August. They lived for about a month in a small one room shack and on September 29, 1928, moved into their new home.

Logs were hauled to the Gitzel sawmill at the Wapiti for lumber to build a barn and granaries. While the logs were being sawed Ira and Elmer, Wes and Irwin Ferris boarded at John and Charlie Penman's on Penman's flat. They provided their own food but had to seek shelter from the winter cold.

For several years the old 1530 tractor travelled from one farm to another breaking and clearing land. The threshing machine also made the rounds each fall and in 1929 a threshing crew consisting of Jack Innes, Ed Peckham, Scotty Fitzsimmons, Mart Garry, Irving Robideau, Tom Dixon and Jim Coney threshed for Dad Robideau, Nelson McLaughlin, Rupert Weegar, Sam and Nat Hunter, Leon and Oliver Menard, Bill Hall, Mart Garry, Jack Haworth and Fred Dewhurst. This continued for many years until new machinery began to take over for the threshing machine.

In 1930, Ira was elected Chairman of the School Board. He served for five years on the School Board and then resigned. He then was elected to the Municipal Council and served for five years until the Council changed to a County operation.

In 1932, the final member of their family was born, a daughter, Helen. During 1939 both Neil and Elmer were married. Neil married Betty Wales, at the home of Ross and Annie Wales. Elmer married June Ferris; they separated after a number of years to find new lives.

That same year Nellie, accompanied by Helen travelled to Ontario by train and spent several months visiting her brothers and one sister. They had arranged for a cousin, Betty Meraw from Rio Grande to keep the home going during Nellie's absence.

When World War II began Neil and Earl joined the Air Force and Army respectively and served until the end of the war. Elmer again remained with his Dad to help keep the farm going.

In 1944, Ira made his bow to provincial politics and as Social Credit candidate was elected to the Legislature. His first trip to the Legislative Assembly was rather unnerving for him. He worried that the Prince Edward Island farm boy wouldn't be able to make it with the "big boys". However, he managed very well and during the first years Nellie often accompanied him. At one tea on the Legislative grounds they were presented to Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip.

In 1948, Joan became the bride of Russell Ames. They farmed and did custom grain hauling in the Bezanson area until 1974.

Joan and Russell have two children, a boy, Danny in 1950, and a girl, Terry in 1951. Terry married Roland LaCroix in 1969. Roland is the son of Raymond LaCroix and the late Cecile LaCroix formerly of Debolt. Roland is employed as a mechanic for the County of Grande Prairie. They now have three children, 2 girls and a boy.

Danny married Donna Redwood in 1975. Donna is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Redwood of Grande Prairie. Danny is now in partnership with his Dad in a trucking business.

In 1949, Jean married Herbert Kimble and went to live in the Crystal Creek area where Herbert farmed.

On July 14, 1950, Gordon was born to Herbert and Jean. Monte was born July 21, 1953. Almost ten years later on May 21, 1963, twin boys, Rocky and Robin came along to complete the family of four boys.

Gordon married Patricia Hennigar, daughter of Lawrence and Margaret Hennigar in 1970. They have two daughters, Tanya and Neena.

In 1950, Ira decided he should quit farming and let Earl take over. He, Nellie and Helen moved into Grande Prairie. In November that year Earl married Myrtle Ford (Thorpe) and with two sons, Brian and Lynn, continued on with the farm. Earl put the farm back into cattle, only choosing to raise beef cattle instead of the Holsteins his Dad had raised.

In 1954, Helen married Allan Redwood and was off to Victoria, B.C., where Allan was serving in the Navy.

In 1956, Allan resigned from the Navy and they returned to Grande Prairie. In 1958, their first son, Ira, was born. They moved to Inuvik, N.W.T., in 1959 and their second son, Ward was born in 1960, in their own home. A blue towel on a broom out the upstairs window informed neighbours it was a boy. After two years they returned briefly to Grande Prairie, then to

Whitecourt and Leduc. There their third child, a daughter, Lois, was born. They lived in Millet for twelve years where Allan worked at the Edmonton International Airport. They then returned to Grande Prairie where Allan received employment with Proctor and Gamble. Helen became an employee of the Canadian Imperical Bank of Commerce.

Ira resides at home preparing for a career in surveying. Ward attends the Grande Prairie High School and Lois attends Montrose Junior High School.

Time passed swiftly and Ira and Nellie found themselves being grandparents and great-grandparents many times over. During those years Ira served continuously as M.L.A. for the Grande Prairie Constituency for 27 years until retirement in August, 1971. In 1962, he was named to the Cabinet as Chairman of the Northern Alberta Development Council and Minister without Portfolio. In 1965 he changed places with his Deputy Chairman, M.L.A., A. O. Fimrite, and continued as Deputy Chairman until his retirement.

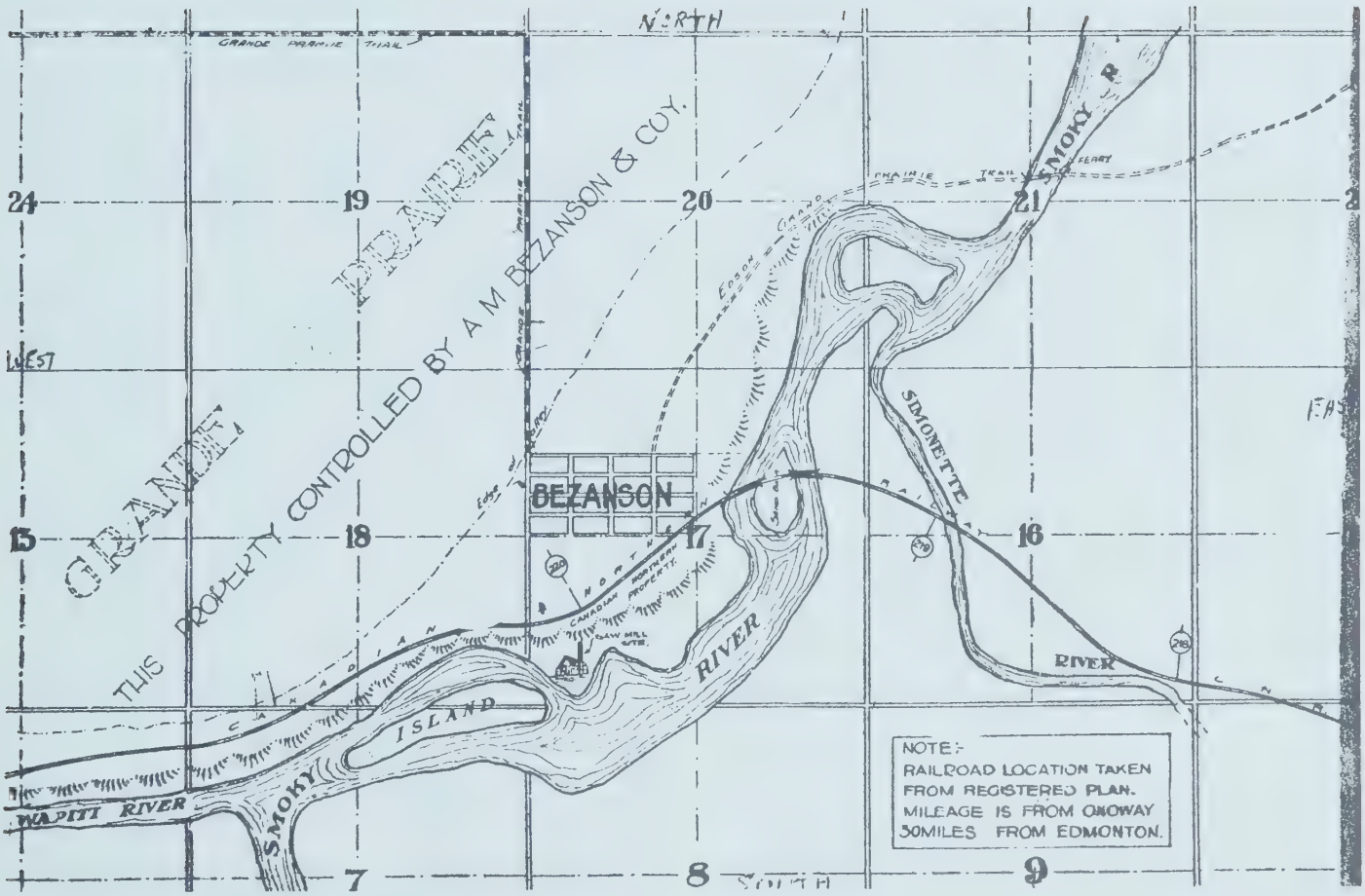
In 1969, tragedy struck the family when Neil became ill and passed away due to cancer at the age of 55 years.

After several years of being a bachelor, Elmer married Pearl Rycroft (Talbot) on October 10, 1970. Many friends gathered to wish them well at their wedding dance in the Bezanson Hall.

Ira and Nellie celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary with family and friends on November 6, 1972. At this time they had 22 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Ira enjoyed his retirement until January 8th, 1974, when once again tragedy struck as Ira closed the last chapter of his life just three days after his 83rd birthday. Nellie lived alone for a short time then moved into Central Park Lodge where she lived for a year until she fell and broke a hip. She spent some time in the Grande Prairie Hospital until she was moved to the Auxiliary Hospital where she still remains. Nellie now has 22 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren with more to come.





HAP AND MYRT McLAUGHLIN

Life on the old farm has been a busy, if not too prosperous experience, for Hap and Myrt.

Brian was taking grade two in the old Lindsay school. Riding horseback was a hard experience for him. He liked horses, but they were a whole new world at that time. He often just rode as far as Art Reeses', then rode with them the three miles to school. The next term, when Lynn started, was better, as the school bus was running, which ended the problem, of a way of getting to school for so many.

Hap's dream was to have a herd of white faced cattle and a good saddle horse; so that has been the direction of life for the Mc's. They started with two Holstein



Brian and Lynn and old 'Jean'.

cows and a blue Heifer, Old Chuck, (Charlie for short as Lynn told grandpa) the saddle horse, and Dina and Star, a team of big Percherons.

As time passed, the herd grew until more summer pasture was needed. In the spring of 1957, Hap and 'Beezer' started looking for a way of crossing the Wapiti, even trying to ford on Chuck at the rapids. They got their feet swept from under them in the undercurrent. After a lot of looking and discussion, it was decided, in July, to give the cows a try. What a time was had getting cows, that had never seen anything but a slough or dugout, to swim across a river! Calves were caught, tied and rowboated over, to be held on the far shore. Their bawling coaxed their mothers across to join them. Everyone helped, whacking with sticks, throwing rocks and with a few bad words, the job was finally accomplished. The yearly cattle drive since, has been a grand day for a lot of young people of the district. Bonny Cochrane, just a baby and wearing the dolls overalls on the first drive, has hardly missed one since. Jack Moon, who is very deft at helping tube up an ornery bull to be pulled across behind the boat, has always helped us.

When around stock, you soon learn each animal has his own character. One is polite and gentle, while another is a rammy and rough. Then there are the snoops and fence crawlers, etc. It takes years of patience, picking and choosing to build a herd. The cattle are a lot of hard work, but there are times of pure pleasure too; such as when you see a cow take her calf across the river on her back, or watch as a mother cow takes her baby who is blind in both eyes with pink-eye, into the river and across to the far shore.

It was always a delight when Ira, Hap and Beezer would remember back to the 'good old days'. They have hilarious memories of some of the bachelor neighbors, especially Henry Trip, a small, clean-shaven, man with a character and humour you only meet once in a lifetime. The Mc's., rented Henry's farm, and when working his land, they would feed the horses and eat their noon meal with him.

One day, they came in and Henry had two shingles, smeared with grease, and swarming with flies, hanging above the table. Of course, Hap and Beezer were eyeing this thing, with Henry not paying any attention, it seemed. All at once, he clapped the boards together and down came a shower of dead flies, right in the middle of dinner!

Then there was the day they came in to find Henry chasing an old hen around in the house with the broom, dinner on the table again. The poor old hen was flying, and flapping months of dust off all the shelves and cupboards, before Henry finally opened the door and let her out. Spring house-cleaning was done for that year! They swear, to this day, that they couldn't see each other while eating dinner.

Oh! and the time they had the horses in, and fed for noon, when Henry spotted a weasel in the barn. Without delay, he got his shotgun and started shooting. Well!, the poor horses thought war had broken out. Dinner was forgotten, halters were broken, and the horses were gone. The rest of the day was spent catching up to the horses and fixing harness. They never knew if Henry got his weasel that day.

There were many, many things that happened that left lasting impressions on the teenage Mc. boys. Henry got his water from a slough near the barn. The water was so brown that Hap and Beezer were never quite sure when tea was poured, if tea had been added or not!

Once when Henry's horses broke into his winter's feed, he told them, "Hmmmm, you S.O.B.'s, you can eat it now, or leave it for spring work".

The day Henry got his new car, he started it up and took off right over the wood pile, all the while Henry was shouting, Whoa; when he finally got it stopped, he told it, "Hmmmm, you S.O.B.' if you came over it one way, you can go back", which he did. One afternoon, Henry was riding by on his horse, and not having a spur, he gave the horse a dig with the tip of a little pen knife he carried. Of course, the horse jumped, and Henry fell over backward onto the road.

But the boys had a deep respect for Henry, after watching him crawl, on hands and knees, into a low pig shelter to bring out an old boar that was shompping and frothing at the mouth. Henry just told him, "Hmmmm, you S.O.B., if you come for me, you better make a job of it". He brought the boar out without getting a scratch!

Among the many stories Henry told, he would speak of the island where he lived before coming to the Peace Country. He never mentioned the name of the island; it was just 'The Island'. This amused the boys so much, that they picked out an island on the Smoky River and christened it "Trips Island". To this day it is still called that.

Many memories go back to the days when they cut logs to build the horse, cow, and pig barns. In the spring of 1933, they lost the winters' log cut, in the Smoky flood. There were winters when they drove back into Smith Camp, south of the Wapiti, to cut posts, and loads of firewood. These were cut and hauled, for home and schools, for $1.60 a cord. The wood sawing crews went from place to place, sawing that wood in the spring. Hap lost two fingers of his right hand in 1935, while sawing wood.

They are amused, now, when they recall the hard winter trips hauling grain and pigs, the long 24 miles to



Tubing the bull to cross the river. Brian and Hap McLaughlin, 1975.

Grande Prairie. There were cold nights when they came home, standing on the pole, holding their hands between the horses legs to warm then enough to get their buttons undone. Sometimes, they walked for miles, behind the sleigh, to keep from freezing their feet. At times the sleighs would cut off the narrow track and upset, losing their load. One team would break trail for a mile, or two, then change off with another team.

The highlight of one trip, with a load of pigs, was going to a Jessie James show. They reeked of pigs, but the show was fully enjoyed. Beezer even leaped to his feet, shouting, "whoa" as Jessie, and horse, went over the cliff.

The older ones still wonder at the miracle, or mystery, of colour T.V., being beamed from Mars. We remember, such a short time back it seems, Bill Hall, with his ear phones on, became so excited when, through the static, squeeling and noise, he would hear the call letters from a far-off place, such as K.S.L., Salt Lake City.

Brian and Lynn enjoyed all these stories, and had a few of their own along the way, with all the normal, frustrating and happy times of growing up on a farm.

Things to remember are: riding the calves when they shouldn't, shooting the odd chicken for target practice when the old folks weren't home, chasing the pigs, swimming in the muddy dugouts, getting the itch and water-sick, running barefoot along the cool shady cowpaths, looking for bird nests, catching baby rabbits and carrying them home, or making sling-shots and bow and arrows from willow trees.

The light of their younger years, was old Jean, their horse. They rode her and swam with her; diving off her back in the dugout by the highway. Wayne and Danny Ford and Bobby and Billy Cochrane would come and stay overnight to enjoy the horse too. You would see all three, or four, on her, either going swimming, or to a Saturday show at the Bezanson Hall.

Art Reese gave them a two-wheeled cart and harness; then they had a driving horse too.

We will never know just what all did take place through the years, but one day, they hooked Chuck to the cart. Lynn was driving the stagecoach, Wayne was the outrider on Rye, Brian, the robber with cap guns in hand, hidden behind a rock, jumped out to hold up the stage. The poor horse got such a fright, he bolted. The cart banged Chuck's heels, adding to his fright. By the time the runaway came to a halt, Lynn and horse were all shook up. The horse was unhooked on the spot. The cart rests there to this day, just a memory by a slough in the south field.

Even now, when the boys get together, they remember the good times. They recall the stinging experience of getting caught in a hail storm, while riding home from the swimming hole, wearing nothing but bathing trunks.

One time, they begged to be allowed to sleep in their tree house; just a platform about eight feet up in some poplar trees in the pasture, with an old piece of canvas fashioned into a roof. About midnight, a thunder storm came up. It seems, Lynn tried to fix the roof to keep the rain out; but the wind, lightning, thunder and rain, proved too much, so they decided to run for the house. Lynn was attired in nothing but rubber boots. They did spend some happy nights in their tree house, that summer, though.

Then, there were the hard parts like; carrying wood for the cook stove, coal for the heater, turning the cream separator, hoeing and weeding potatoes, plucking and dressing hundreds of chickens, and churning butter. They did their share of dishes, cleaning barns, and feeding pigs and cows. The boys grew up, getting a taste of; cutting grain with a binder, stooking, and shovelling in the bin from the big grain separator, Hap, Art and Johnnie Stark, threshed with in those days.

They stayed at the Wapiti Lodge dormitory, in Grande Prairie, while attending high school, until they quit and went driving a truck, for Henry Ford, and numerous other jobs.

Brian and Colleen Head, youngest daughter of Sherman and Betty Head of Grovedale, Alberta were married in 1965, and made their home in Grande Prairie. They had two boys, Bradly and Reid.

It was no surprise, when Lynn joined the gun club in Grande Prairie, and bought a hand gun, as he had always loved guns. There wasn't a pail on the farm without a bullet hole in it!

One Sunday, Hap and Myrt were checking the cattle across the river. Lynn, and Dwight Ford, were home alone, practicing their quickdraw. Lynn accidently shot himself in the leg. Dwight phoned Brian, who broke the speed limit getting out to the farm, only to find the boys boiling a knife, getting ready to remove the bullet they thought they could see, under the skin above his ankle. Needless to say, Brian took him to a doctor!

In May, 1968, we lost Lynn in a boating accident on the Wapiti river. The whole country gave their time, combing the Wapiti on foot, and by boat, from the Canfor ice bridge, to the Smoky river bridge. For days, neighbors stood watch, day and night, at the Smoky bridge, for some sign of his body; but no trace has ever been found.

It was a terrible blow for the McLaughlin family, and spring work became a real burden. Again the neighbors lightened the load, by coming in on, June 2nd, with tractors, equipment and food. Dozens of men, women and boys, worked the land, picked rocks, and put the crop in. There are really no words to express our gratitude for everyone's help and kindness. The Peace Country must be a very special place to live and grow in.

The loss of his only brother made a deep impression on Brian. Feeling left alone, he reconsidered his family of two. So Monty Lynn was born on June 11, 1969.

Twenty-six years have passed on the old McLaughlin farm. The dream of the herd of white-faced cattle has been realized, but Hap still keeps dreaming of having a good horse.

Brian still living in Grande Prairie, divides his time between his job and the farm. His three boys are growing up, enjoying some of the glorious times he, Lynn, and the McLaughlin boys before them, enjoyed.

ELMER AND JUNE McLAUGHLIN STORY — March, 1977

Elmer McLaughlin, somewhere through the years, no one seems to remember just how, became "Beezer" as Earl became "Hap".

The kids at Lindsay school will never forget the day, in the spring of 1928, when a cyclone from Saskatchewan struck. There wasn't much school work done by either boy or girl, seated around Beezer. Mr. Skinner must surely smile when he remembers Beezer coming in late with a spur strapped to his bare foot. But all good kids stuff was short-lived for the Lindsay kids. Beezer went to the Bezanson school in the fall.

Beezer grew up quite able to cope with the hard life on the farm at that time. He and June Ferris were married in November, 1940 and settled down to a life of farming on their farm (N.E. 2-72-3-W6), where Jimmy in September, 1942 and Judy in April, 1945 were born.

By this time, Beezer and June tired of farming, decided to try something else. The farm was sold to Harry Nellis and a D 4 'cat' was purchased. Beezer's cat worked for the Department of Highways for some time. June and the kids followed the construction work, living in a bunk house.

Then a larger 'cat' was bought, taking a job on the Hart Highway in B.C. Ricky was born in June, 1949 and Joy in July, 1950. Beezer's 'cat' was working on the White-court cut off road to Edmonton at this time.

The family were growing and had to go to school, so a half section of school land was bought (W.½ 11-72-3-W6.) Roddy was born March, 1953 and Debbie, January, 1957. The children were going to the Bezanson school.

They bought a few head of cattle, he and Hap running them across the Wapiti River. Beezer stayed in the 'cat' business until 1958 or '59. The kids grew up enjoying life on the farm, Jim and Judy taking part in the 'fairs' with their saddle and jumping horses.

Then Beezer went into full-time farming and raising cattle with brother Neil.

Jim and Judy took their high school in Grande



Elmer McLaughlin, 1962. Joy, Judy, Roddy, Rick. Seated: June, Debby and Elmer.

Prairie, staying at the Wapiti Lodge dorm. Judy went on to take a nurses aid course. Later she married Dennis Snydmiller from Debolt, who worked for the Oil Co.'s. They made their home in Crooked Creek, where their 4 children were born; Marge 1966, Toni 1967, Patsy 1969, and Robert Dennis 1970. Trouble was plaguing their family and the marriage ended in divorce. Judy is now making her home with the 4 children in Grande Prairie.

June found life on the farm too hard and took a job in the Grande Prairie Hospital, this break in the family ended with each of them going their own way, Beezer being left with the 4 younger children. Life was in a turmoil at that time, when Ricky was shot in the back with a shot gun in a hunting accident. They weren't sure if he was going to live or not for a time, but he did come out of it fine, with no bad effects.

Jim married Pat Middlestead, a Grande Prairie girl in September, 1966. They have 2 girls; Connie, 1967 and Carrie, 1969. They bought a home in Grande Prairie. Jim is now working for the County.

Ricky married Barbara Ford in March, 1969 and had 2 children, Jason and Raeann, the marriage ending in divorce. Ricky is now working for the city of Grande Prairie. He has never remarried.

Joy finished high school and took a secretary job in Stony Plain, where she met and married Gerry Repecka, August, 1970.

Beezer and Pearl Rycroft were married in October, 1970 making their home at the Bezanson farm with Roddy, Debbie and Doug, Pearl's son. They have done a lot of nice things to the old farm home.

When Roddy finished high school he joined the R.C.M.P. graduating from training school in Regina, Saskatchewan and is now stationed at Wetaskiwin, Alberta. He and Cheryl Papke of Didsbury are to be married, April 23, 1977.

Debbie is still going to College and living in Grande Prairie. Beezer and Pearl are kept busy, Beezer operating the loader on the gravel haul for the Grande Prairie county and Pearl operating the scales.

JIM McLELLAND STORY — February, 1977

Jim was born in Scotland in 1904, and lived there for 23 years. His parents were farmers. Their farms, of course, were small compared to here. They grew most of what they had to eat, along with having a couple of cows and a few pigs, so had their own milk, cream, butter and meat.

There was a lot of talk of the wonderful life in Canada, especially the West, and the advantages of so much space, which they didn't have. When Jim came there was a boat load of mostly young adults, around 5000 of them heading out to a new land and a new life.

He arrived on Canadian soil in Halifax, Nova Scotia in April, 1927. It was very cold there so he immediately headed west and came to Edmonton, Alberta and on to Wembley, Alberta which was as far as the railroad went then. A young couple, the Alec. Craigs had, also come out from Scotland and took up land near Wembley. Alec., already had 2 brothers farming there who had come years before. Jim used to play the violin for dances in this district. He worked at many



Earl Weegar and Jim McLelland after a big meal in 1964.

different jobs all over Alberta and B.C., especially doing bush work.

The first year Jim was at Craigs, the men were getting up ice (in the winter) and he fell into the water. It was near Bill Grant's place, so when they got him out, he went to their place to get dried off. His clothes were froze to him and he looked like a walking icicle. Mrs. Grant gave him a glass of Scotch whiskey and got a tub of hot water for him to get thawed out in. When he got out of the tub, they gave him some of Bill's clothes to put on. Bill was a real short man and Jim was tall, so the clothes didn't fit well — a little short in the arms and legs, but this didn't bother Jim. He was feeling much better by now and he said he wouldn't mind falling in again if he could just have another drink of that good whiskey!

Around 1955, Scotty Stewart and Jim came out to Bezanson to stucco Charlie Moon's house. When it was finished he stayed to help harvest at Pete Moon's. Here he made his home until Pete died in 1962. He was living in a bunkhouse there and this was given to him. The house was moved to Earl and Allie Weegars yard where Jim continued to live. He worked for Earl doing farm work and chores until he retired and got his pension. Now he just looks after the chickens.

Last year a new house was built for him and he lives there very comfortably, taking his meals with Earl and Allie. He has television and enjoys it very much.

OLIVER MENARD STORY — by Nora (Menard) Newman — January, 1977

Oliver Menard left his home in Ontario as a lad of 19 years. At this age he had already worked in lumber camps and on farms, and the slogan "Go West, young man, Go West" held sway over the minds of the more adventurous young men. So he worked his way across Canada, arriving in Bezanson, Alberta in 1909. After a short stay, he walked back to Edmonton and took a job as cook for the Grande Trunk Railroad. He now was hearing a great deal about the Peace River Country, and particularly about the Bezanson townsite which at that time was being promoted. His dream was of a farm of his own, so in 1911, he returned and filed on a homestead at Bezanson (N.E. 36-72-3-W6.) He came in over the famous Edson Trail, and indeed one could write a book on just the experiences of that journey alone, as many an Edson trailer will agree.

After establishing his boundaries and choosing a site, the first job to tackle was shelter. After clearing



Oliver Menard.

a spot, and chopping down necessary poplars — up went Oliver's first "shack". It was about 8 x 10 or 12 ft. — no official measurements seeming important at the time, and was built of poplar logs and had a sod roof. The next important thing of course, was a way to make a living until one could clear enough land for a crop, and trapping seemed the most logical way. Game was plentiful, and in winter many prime furs were there for the taking. So while clearing land, one spent leisure time hunting for meat; deer, moose, prairie chicken and the much maligned rabbit, which became a "main stay", as it was actually the easiest for the inexperienced to acquire.

The farm gradually took shape, a few acres a year, cleared and planted with the assistance of a horse and walking plow. At first there was no grain to haul, it was needed for grist and feed, then a load or two to sell.

The second house Oliver built was of good spruce logs, and proudly boasted two rooms, with a roof of "shakes" or homemade shingles. The first shack became the hen house.

In these years much more was needed: machinery for working the land, more horses, a more diversified kind of farming with a few pigs to feed. So Oliver, like many others, would spend the winter in a logging camp, till finally the farm was a reality. If your wants were simple, one could "live on the farm" and those were really happy days. By this time, the third house was built on the farm in 1917. Built in the way of the Pioneers, the lumber was cut and worked for in local mills, and the house built with the help of neighbours. It contained four rooms; a kitchen, a sitting room and 2 bedrooms. By this time Oliver was a fairly successful farmer. Not rich, one never thought of riches, our thoughts ran more to a richer way of life, and everyone worked for it, getting schools and forming communities with halls for recreation.



Oliver Menard home in 1917.

Oliver was married in 1931 to Nora Peckham and they raised a family of three. Albert, the eldest now residing in Wainwright, Alberta, with his wife Gene and 5 children.

Claire, who married Roy Persson, the son of a Valleyview, pioneer family and Laura who married Milo Sandberg. Both Claire and Laura reside in Prince George, B.C. with their families.

These were the depression years and things progressed slowly, but still hung on. The children attended Bezanson school, the girls finally attending high school in Grande Prairie, boarding out, and just getting home on weekends.

Albert, was by now, working with Oliver on the farm, finally working as partners. After Albert's marriage, he and his wife made their home on the old home place and Oliver and his wife bought the quarter of land joining them on the west, and built a small house to retire in. They lived in this house for another five years and in 1960 Oliver passed away at the age of 72 years. His wife Nora remarried and now resides in Beaverlodge, Alberta.

DOUGLAS METCALFE

In 1924, Doug worked in Saskatchewan with Grant Lowe, harvesting. In 1925, he came to Charlie Moon's at Bezanson, Alberta and worked for him. In 1926, he bought the S.W. 1-72-3-W6 from Joe Thompson, who had homesteaded there. In 1928, Doug and Rupert Weegar, who were batching together at the time, did some breaking on his land. In the fall he went back to

Ontario. In 1930 he came back again for a short time and left again.

OTTO MILLER AND FAMILY — March, 1977

Henry Otto Miller was born at Normandy Twp., Grey County, Manitoba on July 18, 1888. He married Jane Rusch of Oakburn, Manitoba (born March 9, 1896) on December 31, 1912 and lived in Oakburn.

They were blessed with 4 children; Aldred (1914), Carlyle (1917), Carman (1919) and Lorraine (1923). They were farmers in Manitoba. They came to the Peace River Country in 1941 staying in Bezanson for almost three years. They lived in George Ames' old house a little west of where the Bezanson Village is now.



Mr. and Mrs. Otto Miller, Mr. and Mrs. George Ames.

In 1944, they moved to Clarkson Valley, here Otto ran the steamer for Charlie Moon for two years at Moon's Mill. They rented Altenoff's place to live. In 1945, they homesteaded land in the Harper Creek district. They farmed and milked cows there for many years.

In 1972, they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. They retired and moved to Grande Prairie and are enjoying life there. They spent Christmas, 1976 and New Year's with their daughter and son-in-law, Lorraine and Joe Gunson of Crooked Creek. They still have some land there that Joe farms for them and they like to go back out to the farm once in awhile.

Aldred died in 1973 and his wife lives in Nipawin, Saskatchewan.

Carlyle married Dorothy Baker and came to Bezanson in 1942.

Lorraine married Joe Gunson in 1943 and live at Crooked Creek. They were blessed with 7 children; Kenneth (1944) living now in Ontario. Melvin (1946) now living in Grande Prairie. Marlene (1947) living at Leduc, Alberta. Bryan (1951) living in Grande Prairie. Judy married to Dennis Ford of Bezanson was born in (1953) and living in Grande Prairie. Edward (1956) in Grande Prairie and Edith (1959) still lives at home. Lorraine and Joe's children got their education in the Ridge Valley school.

Carman lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

CARLYLE MILLER AND FAMILY — March, 1977

Carlyle and Dorothy Miller were born and raised in Vista, Manitoba. Carlyle was born April, 1917 and Dorothy on March 24, 1925.



Otto Miller, 3rd from left with Moon's Mill at Crooked Creek, 1941.

Carlyle joined the Army in 1940 and was later discharged, on account of a knee injury.

He married Dorothy Baker in 1942 and came west to the Peace River country later in the fall. They lived near the Bezanson village for over a year and then moved to Peter Moon's where Carlyle took over the farming and Dorothy took care of the household duties.

They had 6 children; Margaret, Beverly, Lynn, Christie, Joanne and Barbara. They all attended school in Bezanson and high school in Grande Prairie and Sexsmith. They were all very active in sports.

All were saddened by Peter's accidental death in September, 1964.

The Carlyle Millers still reside on Peter Moon's homestead where they raised cattle, farm, and Carlyle does a lot of custom grain hauling.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MINCHIN FAMILY — compiled by John Archibald Minchin — February, 1977

Ancestors

Daniel Howard Minchin was born in Dundas, Ontario in 1884.

Mary Christina McKinley was born in Rose Valley, Prince Edward Island in 1886.

The Minchin line emigrated from County Wexford, Ireland, in the year 1800 and settled in Prince Edward Island. Archibald, the father of Daniel Howard, left Prince Edward Island as a young man and farmed in the vicinity of Dundas, Ontario. Daniel Howard was trained as a blacksmith and in the year 1903 at the age of 19 he left for the west and settled in what is now the community of Spruce Grove, Alberta. He became acquainted with people who were interested in the Peace River Country and joined with them to move to that area.

Mary Christina McKinley left Prince Edward Island at the age of 16 and with her family settled in the Spruce Grove area of Alberta in 1902. It was here that she met and married Daniel Howard Minchin and decided to become one of the early pioneers of the Peace.



Back row: Margaret, Jack, Sally and Howard. Front: Dan, Billie, and Mayme.

Time of Arrival

In the early summer of 1912, Dan Minchin, accompanied by the male members of the Moon family, Ross Wales and the Leslie brothers travelled over the Edson Trail to take out homesteads in the Bezanson district. They returned to Edmonton and with their young wives and their belongings took the winter route via Lesser Slave Lake into the Peace River Country. There were no children on this expedition as they were newly married couples.

The Minchin quarter originally filed on is the N.E.¼ of Section 28, Township 71, Range 3, West of the 6th Meridian. Later, Dan Minchin's father, Archibald, filed on the S.W.¼ of Section 34, Township 71, Range 3, West of the 6th Meridian. There was some South African Script also in the holdings but I do not know the legal description. Dan's brother John was a participant in the South African Boer War so the family was entitled to selection of land in his name as he didn't survive the war.

The Minchin Family

The business of raising a family in pioneer surroundings was undertaken without question. Everyone helped each other in all circumstances. A doctor was available at this time but the babies arrived in the home, not in the hospital, as such a luxury wasn't available at first. Sally arrived October 16, 1913 and Howard on November 1, 1914; both born on the homestead. Jack was the first of the family born in hospital in Grande Prairie on February 23, 1916 and Margaret arrived September 10, 1917. Bill came into the world on March 6, 1927 when Grande Prairie was already a bustling community. Since nicknames and slight adjustment of names is prevalent in our society I should list the names as each was christened:

Sally — Sara McLure
Howard — Daniel Howard
Jack — John Archibald
Margaret — Margaret Keneen
Bill — William Humphrey

Howard and Sally attended the Somme School for a short period. At about this time a momentous decision was made. Dan Minchin became interested in politics and worked with the Conservative Party. He received an appointment with the old Department of Lands and Forests in the Federal Government, and moved the family into a new home on the western outskirts of Grande Prairie. Our contact with the Bezanson community was not completely severed as we spent many enjoyable summer holidays with the Wales and Moon families.

In the fall of 1927, a transfer to Calgary was accepted and the family departed the Peace for a period of 7 years.

The family was soon to start moving around. They had all attended Montrose School in Grande Prairie. Both Sally and Howard had finished high school in Calgary. It was the height of the depression. Sally worked for a while in Paddy Croken's store and in the Alberta Government Telephone office in Grande Prairie. Howard can recall many interesting happenings while he worked in the Morrison store at Debolt. Jack took a job with the Beaver Lumber Com-

pany and later with Bill Caldwell's Men's Furnishings and Thompson Hardware in Grande Prairie.

Sally was the first to decide to look for greener pastures. She trained as a nurse in the Vancouver General Hospital and after graduation practiced in Kimberley, British Columbia. Here she met and married Ron McEachern, a geologist with Consolidated Mining and Smelting. They have two children, a daughter Joan and a son, Bruce. They lived for many years in Trail and later in Montreal. Ron is now retired and he and Sally reside in Vancouver.

Howard and Jack were the next to leave. Both decided to go to the Edmonton Normal School. Upon graduation they returned to the Peace River to teach. When the war broke out they were teaching at Lake Saskatoon.

Three of the family were in the Armed Forces. Howard, Jack and Margaret joined the RCAF. The boys spent 3½ years overseas and Margaret got as far as Newfoundland. All returned safely.

Howard and Jack, both married and with families decided to pursue new careers. Taking advantage of the Veterans benefits they returned to the University of Alberta. Jack graduated with a BSc. in Geology in 1948 and Howard with a Masters in Economics in 1950. Margaret had been trained as a Secretary in the RCAF and she has continued to work in this area ever since. She is employed by Alberta Government Telephones in Edmonton.

Howard married Anita Sinclair, a nurse he had met in Aberdeen when he was stationed in that part of Scotland. They have 3 sons, Brian, Kenneth and Dean and 2 daughters, Lorraine and Eileen. Howard is employed by Northwestern Utilities in Edmonton. He has been with the same firm since graduation in 1950.

Jack married Patricia Stronach of Kinsella, Alberta in 1941. They have 3 children; Bonnie, now living in North Bay, Ontario, John in Calgary and Janenne in Edmonton. He is presently employed by PanCanadian Petroleum Limited in Calgary.

Bill graduated from the University of Alberta with a degree in Chemical Engineering. Since graduation he has been employed by The Aluminum Company of Canada and is presently located in Kitimat, British Columbia. Bill married his high school sweetheart, Kae Murray. They have 4 children; Karen, Joanne, Daniel and Murray.

At one time or another, all of the family attended Montrose School in Grande Prairie. We have pleasant memories of the elementary grades. We were very fortunate to have had such a good start in school.

The property at Bezanson was sold. Vernon Patterson purchased the S.W.¼ of 34-71-3-W. 6 M. (Grandfather Minchin's homestead) and I believe that Alf Moon purchased the rest. The property in Grande Prairie was sold to Jack Low, another longtime resident of the Bezanson district. I was informed recently that the house was moved to the Flying Shot district and can be seen from the highway, west of Grande Prairie. It was moved to make way for an apartment building.

Some Memories

We were most fortunate to have spent our formative years in the midst of a real pioneering environment with many interesting and exciting people around us. There are the memories of doing things — there are no memories of loneliness or despair. "Picking wild berries, an outing for several families; gathering mushrooms before breakfast and having them served on toast; milking cows in the early morning; earning my first 10 dollars stooking wheat on Steve Garret's farm and putting it in the bank; following a sleigh load of wheat to an elevator in Grande Prairie in the dead of winter; the sleigh bells ringing and runners squealing on the frost; making ice cream with Mrs. Annie Wales encouraging us to finish quickly because the strawberries were all ready; eating the ice cream; playing hide-and-seek and finding a good spot behind the wood pile; going on a picnic to Benson's Point on Bear Lake; stopping the car to repair a flat tire; seeing and hearing the migrating ducks and geese that covered the sky; skating on Bear Creek on an ox-bow below the house; learning to swim in the same creek on an elbow where it was wide and deep; leading our cow to Jack Patterson's farm to visit the bull; going to school on a cold clear morning not knowing it was 20 below or colder; being asked to go to a birthday party". These are only a few memories and they are a part of growing up. I am glad that some of these memories are about Bezanson and I still feel that I am a part of that community.

The family lost their mother in the spring of 1945 and their father in the summer of 1952. They were buried in adjoining plots in the cemetery at Flying Shot, west of Grande Prairie. They lived out their lives in the land they had loved, surrounded by good friends and happy memories.

JACK MITCHELL STORY — by Dorothy (Mitchell) — March, 1976

My father, Jack Mitchell, was born April 6, 1896 at Armstrong Corner, New Brunswick. He served in the First World War. In 1919, he filed on a homestead in the area of Debolt near George Tilley, a good friend. He met Hilda Moon from Bezanson, who was born in Orillia, Ontario, March 8, 1900. Hilda came to Bezanson as a teenager.

In 1925, Hilda and Jack were married and moved to Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A. They had a son, Robert, March 2, 1926 and another son, Donald, September 2, 1928. In 1928, they moved back to Grandma Moon's at Bezanson. Shortly after, Dad got a job buying grain with the United Grain Growers in Huallen. A third son, Jack Jr., was born April 2, 1930. I, Dorothy, was born December 5, 1932. They left Huallen in 1937 and purchased Norman Moon's farm at Bezanson. A second daughter, Joyce (Libby), was delivered by Mrs. Libby Christie (nurse) at her home, July 1, 1942 as the hospital was quarantined for Scarlet Fever.

Our drinking water was from ice off of the Smoky or Wapiti Rivers. We hauled water for the livestock from Stark's Lake, 2½ miles away. Hunting was a great sport; deer, moose, geese, and fishing.

Families got together and went to Blueberry Flats at Brookbanks, by the Smoky River for blueberries. Strawberries we picked on Joe Smith's place across the creek and raspberries from Penman's land across the Wapiti River.



Mitchell family. Don, Bob, Dorothy, Hilda, Jack Sr., Jacky, Libby (in walker).

We had a Maytag gas washing machine, brought from Detroit. The boys played shimmy hockey in winter and fastball in summer. The organized games were the track meet in Grande Prairie in the spring. spring.

We children went to Bezanson school one mile east of our farm; on foot or horseback in the summer, and in the winter with a cutter pulled by "Smoky and Cherry". These 2 horses were used by all 5 children until Joyce finished her grade 3. Some of our teachers were; Miss Alma Ulmer, Mr. B. Joslin, Miss Martha Knectel, Miss Beatrice Moir, Miss Laura Berg and Miss Phyllis Mattoon. Alma and Phyllis both boarded with us.

Threshing crews being a thing of the time, huge meals were prepared. The young boys liked threshing time, riding with the men on their loads of sheaves. The post office and store were run by Pat Rooney and his family. They lived 3 miles north of us.

Some of the ministers I remember were Rev. Roskam about 1940 and later Rev. Davidson.

For entertainment we liked to go to Grande Prairie and have a meal in the Palace or York cafe, also the dances that were usually held every second Friday and an occasional box social which was a family affair. Then in the summer there was always the Community Picnics and Sports Days including; foot races, horse shoe tournaments and baseball.

My father joined the Veteran Guards in 1941 and was at Sarcee Base in southern Alberta. He returned around 1943.

He sold the farm in 1952 and moved to St. Albert, Alberta. Mother passed away in June, 1960, followed by my brother Donald in 1962. Father moved back to New Brunswick in 1965 and married the former Mrs. Beatrice Clarke. They now live in Meductic, New Brunswick.

Bob, Jack, Joyce and myself (Dorothy) are all married and are living in St. Albert, Alberta.

I, Dorothy was born in Grande Prairie December 5, 1932. I went to the old Bezanson school, took grades 1-9 and took my high school in Grande Prairie. I worked for Dr. Compton as a dental assistant for 2 years, then I worked at North Star Oil Refinery from 1956-60. I met Glen Larson and we were married in 1959. We have 3 girls; Janet (1960), Shelley (1963) and Elaine (1964). We now reside in St. Albert, Alberta and I work part-time for Imperial Lumber.

I, Joyce, was born in Grande Prairie at the home of Arnold and Libby Christie on July 1, 1942. I lived on the farm with my parents and sister and 3 brothers. I attended school grades 1 and 2 at Bezanson (old school) and then the next year I went to the Lindsay school at the Bezanson Village, which had been moved there and used until the New Bezanson Consolidated was built in 1957.

In 1952 we (family) moved to St. Albert, where I completed grades 4-11, then took a nursing aide course in 1961. I worked in the Aberhart T.B. Sanatorium for 4 years then went to work with the Red Cross. I married John Paziuk in 1966. We have 3 children; Donald John (1969), Tanya Marie (1970) and Allen Wayne (1975). We presently live in St. Albert, Alberta.

THE MOON FAMILY (Grandma) Moon

Elizabeth Moon came to the Bezanson area in 1913 with her family. She took a great interest in the new community and its people and was affectionately known as Grandma Moon by her many friends as well as her family.

Grandma and Grandpa Moon were married in Ontario and farmed at Moonstone a short distance from Orillia. They were blessed with a large family of six boys and three girls. The family likely would have stayed in the East except for the untimely death, in 1904, of Grandpa Moon.

In the early 1890's, Grandma's parents, sister and brothers left Ontario and pioneered in the Spruce Grove area, west of Edmonton, Alberta. They had sent back glowing reports of the country. Grandma now found herself with a large family to raise alone and it was decided that all except the eldest, May, who was in training for a nurse, would make the move to Edmonton.

The farm was sold keeping only the house and a few acres just in case a return had to be made. In May, 1905 the family boarded a colonist car at Coldwater



Grandma Moon and family — 1945. Norman, Pete, Bob, Alfred, Charlie and Fred. Annie Wales, Mae Scott, Grandma (Elizabeth) and Hilda Mitchell.

and the trip west on the C.P.R. began. After a short stop in Winnipeg, they crossed the prairies and to Calgary, where a day's wait was made for the train to Edmonton. Calgary land developers tried to convince Grandma that to go north to Edmonton would be a great mistake. They said that Country would never be any good except for hunting and some trapping. If she wanted her sons to be trappers, fine, but she should not subject her daughters to that wilderness.

North they came and were met by Uncle Hugh McPhee at the Southside Station. He had a team and wagon and through the swamps, which are now west Edmonton, they went to the McPhee farm south of Spruce Grove. That fall the younger children were enrolled in the Spruce Grover school while Norman and Pete found work in Uncle Pete McPhee's lumber camp.

In March of 1906, Grandma started a boarding house in a large three-storey house on the corner of Edmonton's Jasper Avenue and 106 Street, where Healy Motors operate today. The pavement had not reached that far out yet nor had water and sewer services. The children were sent to MacKay Avenue school and Annie helped her Mother with the boarding house. It was from this school in 1907 that all the children were taken down to view the laying of the cornerstone for Alberta's Legislative building. Old Fort Edmonton was still there and was a favorite spot for boys to investigate.

Grandma found that running a boarding house without running water, just too big a job and a new one was found on Belimy Avenue and 96 Street in 1907. The years to 1911 passed quickly with the boys getting work as they grew older and soon they became interested in the Peace River Country.

Uncle Pete McPhee and his partner, Harry Bell were contractors for the railway building grades. They were told by engineers that a divisional point would be made at the top of the hill where the Wapiti and Smoky Rivers joined. The railway was taking this route to the coast and anyone having land in that area would be in an excellent position to develop a townsite. With this in mind, plans were made for the family to file on land as soon as possible.

In January of 1912, Pete McPhee, six Indians, with their native Indian Scrips, Pete Moon and Dan Minchin went via the Edson Trail to Grande Prairie to file on land near the proposed townsite. Some of that land is in the Moon family today. Pete McPhee filed on six quarters of Indian Scrip for himself and his partners. Pete Moon filed for himself, Grandma Moon and brothers Bob and Norman. Dan Minchin filed on two quarters of South African Scrip for his father and himself. They immediately returned to Edmonton over the Edson Trail without seeing the land.

In late July of 1912, brothers Bob, Pete and Norman Moon, along with Dan Minchin and his father drove with horses and wagons via Lesser Slave Lake to Grande Prairie. The empty wagons were taken around the north side of Lesser Slave while freight was loaded on a boat and shipped to Grouard. Here it was reloaded and continued on to Peace River, Dunvegan and to Bezanson. In coming to the land, a wrong turn was made and the party ended up at the Argonaut Mill on the Wapiti at the mouth of Muskeg Creek. A road had to be cut through this creek and soon the group was at the site. Two cabins were built, one on Grandma Moon's quarter and one on Mr. Minchin Sr.'s quarter. During their stay, Ross Wales and Ed Leslie joined them after coming in the Edson Trail from Edmonton. Ross was looking for good farm land and filed on land four miles to the west. Ed Leslie also filed on adjoining land. Shortly before the men returned to Edmonton, a ground fire swept through the country, burning much of the small brush, but fortunately the cabins and wagons were able to be saved.

Grandma Moon had been busy during this time. She was still active with a boarding house, but now had a new one on Stony Plain Road and 122 Street. The Ontario property had been sold. The family was growing with both Alfred and Bob now on their own. Alfred was driving mail stage to Athabasca via Gibbons. In the spring of 1912, Norman had married Gladys Kennedy. On Christmas day of that year, Ross Wales and Annie Moon were married in Grandma Moon's new home.

The family moved to Bezanson which took place in February of 1913. Grandma was not going to stay in Edmonton and have her family pioneer in the North. At the age of 49 she closed her boarding house and started a new life in the Peace River country. The preparation was made by having a caboose built on one of the flat racks with the others being used to haul household effects and equipment. Fold down beds were made for the women in the party, Grandma, Annie Wales, Gladys Moon and Mamie (Dan Minchin.) The men, Ross Wales, Dan Minchin and Norman Moon drove the sleighs and slept at the stopping places along the route. Fred Moon was only ten years old and went by train to Edson and then with the group north. The trip took two weeks and from reports, was quite an experience for the women — sleeping in the caboose, washing in the snow, peeling frozen vegetables covered with ice and holding pots on the stove as the caboose jolted and swayed while cooking meals.

The cabins were waiting for them and all made do while additional cabins were built on the Wales homestead. Ross was joined, later, by his father and sisters Myrtle and Agnes from Ontario. A more permanent house was built for the Moons at the site of the present Grant Moon home. The first cabins built had sod roofs so water seeped through for days after it had rained. Grandma took all of the pioneering in her usual tolerant cheerful way and soon found that she was needed to act as midwife for not only her own family but for the other settler women as well. The only doctor in the area was Dr. Higbee who had a vast area to cover, by horse, so Grandma's services filled a great need. In July of 1913, her first grandson Hughie was born to Norman and Gladys and of course she was in attendance. That same year, a daughter Sarah was born to Dan and Mamie Minchin and a son Alfred to Ross and Annie Wales.

The spring of 1913 saw some land broken and the first seeding was done by hand. The other members of the family; Bob, Charles, Hilda and Alfred joined the group in 1913. The men made many trips to Edmonton

and back sometimes driving or riding horses, but often walking which was said to be the best way.

In the fall of 1914 Canada was at war and a deep economic depression was on. Word came with Harry Bell that the railroad would not be built and any hope for a townsite was over. The settlement was growing and the family liked the country so no thought was given to leaving, even if they could have done so.

Grandma went to work as a cook in the Grande Prairie hospital as money was needed. The Edmonton house was sold for very little but life was still good if hard. Another son, Bob, married Jean Craig and they stayed for some years before moving to Edmonton where Bob was in the lumber business for many years. Pete married Katherine Grant and raised his family on the quarter next to Grandma's.

Alfred joined the Army and spent some time overseas before returning. Grandma continued to live on the farm and she was very much the centre of things. She took a great interest in her growing family and her grandchildren must have felt her cookie can was bottomless. She was of the Baptist faith and always took an active part in church life whenever she could. Many services of many different denominations were held in her living room in the early days.

The family was once again joined with the Wales family when Alfred married Ross's sister Myrtle. They moved to their farm at Glen Leslie. Charlie married Pearl Bryenton and continued to have Grandma live with them on the home place. Hilda married a young man from New Brunswick by the name of Jack Mitchell. They lived for a time in the U.S. but came back to the Peace River area farming and working with the U.G.G. Fred married Betty Willetts who was teaching at Bezanson. They farmed in the district with Betty teaching for many years before moving to Grande Prairie. The eldest sister, May, visited Grandma many times in later years after her husband, Jack Scott, had passed on.

The years passed and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren had come to love and respect her. In January of 1946, Elizabeth Moon passed away. She was buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery, where many pioneers of East End lie.

NORMAN AND GLADYS MOON AND FAMILY — by Gordon Moon — April, 1977

Norman Hugh Moon was born at Moonstone of Orillia, Ontario on August 21st, 1888. His father Rawling Moon died in 1904 and the following year, Norman's Mother and her family of 6 boys and 3 girls moved west to Edmonton.

Shortly after arriving in Edmonton, Norman was employed with Gardner Lumber Co. and sometime





Norman and Gladys Moon — wedding March 1912.



60th wedding anniversary — Norman and Gladys Moon.



Edna Moon and children, Joyce, Burton, Raymond and Ken.

later along with a partner opened up a real estate office on Jasper Ave.

On March 12th, 1912 Norman and Gladys Kennedy were married in the Presbyterian Church. That same fall Norman and his brother, Peter, along with a few others drove by horse and wagon to Athabaska, then on to the east side of Slave Lake, where they loaded on to the old paddle wheel boat, which took them to Grouard. At that time Grouard was quite a little settlement consisting of a mission, hotel and a hospital of sorts. From Grouard the trail led them to the Peace River Crossing and down the Shaftsberry trail to Dunvegan, then on to Spirit River and Grande Prairie. This took approximately 20 days. After filing on homesteads in the Bezanson district (which was named after A. M. Bezanson) they took out logs and built a shack on which was known as Grandma (Elizabeth) Moon's quarter. Later that year the men returned to Edmonton.

In February of 1913, a group loaded their cabooses and flat racks on the C.N.R. to Edson and left from there over the Edson Trail for the Bezanson district. Some of the members of this group were Alfred Wales, Senior, Ross Wales and wife Annie, Murd McKinley, Fred (around 10 years), Bob, Charlie and Grandma Moon, Norman Leslie, Bob Minchin, Dan and Mamie Minchin and Gladys, wife of Norman. Norman remained in Edmonton to close his real estate business and came up to the district later in May, 1913, over the Edson Trail. This was a 21 day trip as all the rivers had to be forded.

Norman and his brother Peter farmed together until 1926. During this period 3 children were born to Norman and Gladys on the homestead. Hugh in 1913, Gordon in 1915 and Margaret in 1920. The family then moved to Grande Prairie in 1926, here Norman managed the Murray Hotel. In 1927, a son Lawrence was born.



Hughie and Edna Moon.



Gordon Moon children. Danny, Donald, Richard, Brent, Barbara, Karen, Kathy and Elaine.



Margaret and Bill Lee and family.

The family again returned to the farm from 1931-36 until Norman opened a Real Estate and Insurance office in Grande Prairie, he subsequently represented Richardson Road Machinery for many years in the Peace River area.

In August, 1975 Norman passed away at the Swanhaven Nursing Home in Grande Prairie at the age of 87 years. His wife Gladys and oldest son Hugh predeceased him in February and March of the same year. There were 17 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.

Norman and Gladys' 3 remaining children are scattered from Ontario to Victoria, B.C.

Hugh's widow Edna (Tyrell) lives in Beaverlodge as does their son Kenneth, wife Connie and their 2 children. Joyce (Mrs. Peter Werk), Peter and their 2 children also in the Beaverlodge district. Raymond



Gordon and Irene Moon.



Pieranne, Greg, Christine, Lawrence and Evelyn Moon.

and wife Joanne and their 3 children live in Ft. McMurray. Burton and wife Jenny and 2 children are living in Red Deer.

Gordon and wife Irene (Hamell) have remained in Grande Prairie. Their eldest daughter Elaine (Mrs. Ray Stokke) and husband Ray, along with their 4 children live in Grande Prairie.

Barbara (Mrs. Lawrence Yelenik), Lawrence and 3 children live in Valleyview. Kathryn (Mrs. Edward Doerkson), Ed. and their 3 children, living in Peace River.

Richard and wife Susan (Smith) and daughter Stacy reside in Grande Prairie.

Danny and wife Pam (Walton) are in Edmonton.

Donny and Karen live at home.

Margaret and her husband William Lee are living in Fenlon Falls, north of Toronto, Ontario. Their daughter Betty (Mrs. John Noble), John and 2 children are living at Claremont, Ontario, just out of Toronto.

Bill Jr., wife Van and son are residing in Toronto.

Lawrence and wife Evelyn (Turner) and their 3 children are residing in Victoria.

CHARLIE MOON — January, 1977

Born near Orillia, Ontario in 1898, Charles Neil Moon was third youngest in a family of six boys and three girls. In 1905, his widowed mother moved west with her family to Edmonton, where they resided until 1912. Mrs. Moon and brother Pete McPhee drove up to the Peace Country with team and buggy in 1912 to file on homesteads. Leaving Edmonton in February, 1913, the family began the arduous task of building a home and proving up homestead land several miles northwest of the original Bezanson townsite. All of the Moon boys homesteaded in the same area, which soon became to be known as "Moon Settlement". When of age, Charlie filed on land one mile south of the present Bezanson post office and store. Later he sold this land and lived with his mother, affectionately called "Grandma" by everyone in the neighborhood. During the winters he went out to work at lumber camps, being very fond of the bush life.



The Charlie Moon family. Charlie, Grant, Ross, Leta and Pearl.



Grain is getting cut down in a hurry with 4 binders on the Augus place. Binder men are: Charlie and Alf Moon, Jack Stark, and Doug Metcalfe.



Charlie Moon and Grant Lowe. Good old threshing days.

In the dirty 30's, Charlie and brother Pete operated a lumber camp for several years on the Wapiti River southwest of Bezanson. Most of the employees were local farmers. Grande Prairie hotel man Frank Donald purchased most of the lumber for the price of $10.00 per thousand.

By the early 40's, lumbering had become a way of life with Charlie. In partnership with Hector Morrison, Crooked Creek Lumber Company was formed and operated a mill east of Crooked Creek until 1953. The millsite was like a small village, with 26 log cabins for married men and their families, a store complete with gas pumps, a cookhouse and the usual bunkhouses and shops. A large log building was erected which served as a school and dance hall. Through the efforts of former school inspector Stan Hambly, the mill was granted a permit to operate its own private school during the winter months. Mrs. Isabelle Moody was the first teacher, followed by Mrs. Fred Moon.

With an eye always open to new ventures, Charlie noticed the post-war migration of oil exploration into the Peace Country, and together with Charlie Ames invested in four Caterpillar crawler tractors and cut exploration lines and roads for the Seismic Companies.

In 1950, Charlie, John Bickell and Hector Morrison founded a new company named Northern Plywoods and pioneered construction of the original plywood mill at Grande Prairie. The mill began production in 1951, and after operating for a number of years, the partners all sold their interests in Northern Plywoods to Canadian Forest Products of Vancouver.

Charlie married Pearl (Bryenton) Wooldridge in 1937 and a family of one daughter and two sons were raised on the family farm at Bezanson, until moving to Crooked Creek to operate the sawmill in the 40's. Returning to the farm at Bezanson in 1953, Charlie continued farming, although handicapped by arthritis. In April, 1967 Charlie's family and friends were saddened by his death, and the loss of a pioneer who contributed immensely to development of the community through his various business ventures. Mrs. Pearl Moon now resides with sister Gladys Leslie in Grande Prairie. Sons Grant and Ross are married and farm the family farm at Bezanson; daughter Leta is married and lives at Slave Lake.

ROSS MOON

Ross was born in 1943, March 17th, at Grande Prairie. While still an infant, his parents moved to Crooked Creek where his father operated a saw mill. In 1953 after returning to Bezanson, Ross finished his elementary schooling there and attended high school in Grande Prairie.

He took up farming and married Theresa Krzysik, of Sexsmith. They have 3 children; Luanne born in 1971, Brian in 1973 and Patrick in 1974.

GRANT MOON

Grant was born on February 17, 1941 at Grande Prairie and lived on the farm with his family at Bezanson until 1946. He is the eldest son of Charlie and Pearl Moon. He has an older sister Leta and younger brother Ross. In 1946 the family moved to Crooked Creek where his father ran a lumber mill. Grant started to school at Clarkson Valley and the next year a school was opened at the mill. They lived there until 1953, then they moved back to the farm again.

In 1958, he went to high school in Grande Prairie, then attended the Alberta School of Agriculture at Vermilion for two years ('59 and '60).

He returned to the farm and in 1965 married Margaret Miller, daughter of Carlyle and Dorothy Miller of Bezanson. They have 2 children; Donna born in 1966 and Terry born in 1967.

HISTORY OF WILLIAM GRANT MOON — February, 1977

My father, Peter John Moon was born in Orillia, Ontario, December 13, 1890, he came to the Peace River country January, 1912 at the age of 22 and filed on a homestead in the Bezanson area the (S.W. 27-71-3-W. 6). He farmed there all his life until his death, he died from a fall off a granary on September 20, 1964 at the age of 74.

Peter married Catherine Grant from Prince Edward Island in Edmonton on March 4, 1914. They came to the homestead over the Edson Trail, the same spring, which took them three weeks to travel with horses. They lived in a log house with a sod roof for about 10 years. It was built 4 miles south and one-half mile west of the Bezanson store, in the same spot as the new built home in 1964.

Catherine was born on May 4, 1888 in P.E.I. and passed away May 2, 1940. I, William Grant (Bill) Moon, eldest son of Peter, was born May 25, 1917. I have one brother Jack, born, January 26, 1921 and 2 sisters; Mary, born November 16, 1922 and Joyce, born October 28, 1927.

Jack married Lena McDonald of Crystal Creek, April 17, 1946. She passed away June 30, 1958 at the age of 29, they had no children. Jack lives at Bezanson.

Mary has never married and has been a nurse most of her life. She lives in Grande Prairie, Alberta.

Joyce married George Gamble from Vancouver, B.C. on March 4, 1949. They have 7 children and 1 grandchild. They live in Calgary, Alberta.

I married Ida Lee from Beaverlodge on June 30, 1941 at the home of my aunt Libby Christie. The minister was Rev. Fisher of the United Church. Ida was born in Moosomin, Saskatchewan March 28, 1921. We have three children; William Deryle born April 28, 1943; Cheryl Ruth born October 25, 1946 and Gurth Lloyd born October 13, 1952; and 2 grandchildren.

I went to school in Glen Leslie for one year. I rode horseback six miles morning and night. The rest of my schooling I took at Bezanson, 2½ miles east of home, except for my grade 9 in Grande Prairie.

I spent five years of my life farming and raising cattle in partnership with Mr. A. F. Christie, who was an uncle by marriage. He married my mother's sister Libby in 1929. Aunt Libby was born July 22, 1885. Her first husband was Clarence Flint and he was killed in the First World War. We shipped the first full carload of fat cattle that left Grande Prairie in 1938.

Mr. Christie was born on September 12, 1891 and came to the Peace River Country in 1915 where he farmed in different parts of the area. He and Libby

lived in Grande Prairie. Arnold started buying grain for the U.G.G. elevator in 1922 and stayed with them until 1958 when he retired. He continued farming until his death on February 7, 1971.

The next 10 years I spent farming and trucking (1940-50). Then from 1950-60, I was in the mill business with my father. In 1962, we moved to Grande Prairie, when I became a carpenter and am still doing the same line of work. I sold the last of my land in 1975. Our home quarter section was (S.E. 35-71-3-W. 6.)

On March 29, 1967 we had the misfortune of losing our eldest son, Deryle in a car accident in Prince George, B.C. He was employed by Safeway. He passed away at the age of 23.

Our only daughter Cheryl married Stanley Higginson, June 14, 1969. They have 2 children; Tammy Jane born June 7, 1973 and Shane Deryle born April 13, 1976. They live in Grande Prairie.

Our son Gurth is not married and is in partnership in Prism Glass in Grande Prairie.

MR. AND MRS. KENNETH MORRISON — written by Dorothy (Morrison) Leslie

Kenneth Morrison was born at Flat River, Prince Edward Island in 1850. As a young man he left the Island, and went to Virginia City in the U.S.A., where he remained for 20 years, and then returned to P.E.I., where he met and married Edith Isobel Higgins in 1895. She was teaching the local school, and her parents were living in Charlottetown.



Kenneth and Isobel Morrison.

They moved to Rossland, B.C., in 1897, where 3 of their children were born; Marion, Dorothy and Hector. In 1903, they homesteaded in Spring Lake, Alberta, some 50 miles east of Wetaskiwin. Here they farmed, operated a general store and post office until 1909, when they sold out and moved to Vancouver. Ivan was born at Spring Lake in 1907.

They stayed a year in Vancouver, 4 years in Victoria and then 4 years in Grand Forks, B.C., before coming to the Peace River Country to live in 1918. The first winter was spent at the Bezanson Townsite, but the next year they moved into Grande Prairie, Alberta and opened a store there. It burned in 1923 and Mr. Morrison built a new store; a brick building on the corner of 101st and 100 Ave. This he operated until his death in 1931. Hector Morrison operated it until 1941, when he sold to Jack Thompson.

Marion taught school at Glen Leslie, Flying Shot, Twilight and Buffalo Lakes and then taught in Montrose school in Grande Prairie for many years.

Dorothy also taught school at Crystal Creek and East Kleskun, before she married Ed. Leslie in 1921.

Hector married Annette McNaughton from Sexsmith in October, 1929. They had 3 children; Joan, Kay and Roderick. After 1941 Hector operated the John Deere Implement Warehouse. Later he became involved with John Bickell and Charlie Moon in the plywood plant, which they started in Grande Prairie in 1953. They have now retired to live in Kelowna, B.C.

Ivan married Gladys Canning in 1934. They had 2 sons; Ian and Terry. Ivan operated stores in Debolt and Crooked Creek, Alberta. He is now retired and living in Grande Prairie.

HARRY AND GRACE NELLIS STORY — by Harry and Grace — March, 1977

I, Harry, son of L. J. (Moose) Nellis was born March 15, 1920 on the farm at Bezanson, Alberta. I was the second youngest of 7 children.

In August, 1926 my family moved to Grande Prairie. That fall I started to school at Montrose. In April, 1933, we moved back to the farm and I finished out the term of school at Lindsay with Miss Mary Clifford as my teacher. I went there 2 more years and my last teacher was Miss Magaret Lewis.

In 1936 and '37 I played baseball with some of my brothers and the neighbor boys. Then for a couple of years we played softball.

World War II broke out and on October 3, 1940 I joined the Army and went overseas. Ted, Bill and Orville, 3 of my brothers joined the Air Force, Bill and Ted went overseas but Orville remained in Canada.

During the war, I met a lovely English girl, Grace Taylor and later married her. I used to visit at her home along with other Canadian boys and her folks, Ann and Jim Taylor, were very good to us.

After the war in 1948, we started playing baseball again. Some of the boys that played were; Elmer and Earl McLaughlin, Tyke Ames, Don Olson, Dick



Harry Nellis family. Leslie, Lawrence, Grace, Harry and Eddie.



Harry Nellis and family at the Lake.

Howarth, Russel Ames, Vernon Ford, my brothers Ted and Lloyd and myself.

After I was married and we had boys of our own big enough to play ball, the Wapiti Men's Fast Ball League was formed in 1964. Our boys; Leslie, Laurence, and later on Eddie played with Bezanson Norton Bros. team until 1975.

In August, 1973, in the Herald Tribune paper was the following item of sports news: Another season of fast ball for the Wapiti Men's Fast Ball League ended last night here for the Bezanson Norton Bros. It was another successful year. The Norton Bros. did what was expected of them by winning the WMFL championship finals in straight games. WMFL president Jim Boyd presented the League Trophy to Coach Harry Nellis while team captain Laurence Nellis accepted the Championship Trophy.

I, Grace was born in jolly old England on June 13, 1920. I started to school when I was 5 and went till I was 15 years. I went to work right away as a typist for a newspaper man, who was the owner of the Sunday paper, "News of the World", which was the number one paper in England during the war years.

When I was 19, I had to work either in a factory or the Forces. I chose the factory. After a few weeks, wondered why because quite often I went to work and back home again during an Air Raid Alert. I had some very scary experiences and was quite often machine-gunned from the German planes and the little pests we called 'Doodle Bugs' fell pretty close. I was always very glad to get home. It took quite a few hours sometimes, but we all lived through it fortunately. But when I look back we, Harry and I, had some very happy and wonderful times. I worked in the factory for 5 years.

On August 28, 1945 Harry and I were married on a beautiful summer day. From then on it was very exciting getting ready and waiting to come to Canada.

Harry left England in October, 1945 and I arrived in Edmonton, where he met me on July 4, 1946. After a short honeymoon we went to Bezanson. It happened to be the day of the Bezanson Stampede when Harry and I arrived July 12th at Grandma and Grandpa Moose's. They were the only ones home but an hour later all 'H. . .' let loose and within 2 or 3 hours there were over 50 people there. It did not take long to get to know the family because they were all very friendly and good to me.

We raised 3 boys; Leslie James was born July 25, 1947, Laurence on July 1st, 1950 and Edward Roy on September 15, 1956. When Leslie was born we were living at Moons' lumber mill at Crooked Creek, Alberta. We moved to our farm the N.E. 2-72-3-W. 6 on June 30, 1950, which we bought from Elmer McLaughlin and the next day Laurence was born.

In June, 1958, my folks, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Taylor, came from England to visit us. They stayed 5 weeks and it was a wonderful visit but the time passed so quickly and they were soon flying back to their own home.

We lived on the farm until 1975 when we moved to Grande Pairie.

Leslie married Lynda Robideau in 1967 and they have a girl Tracy Dale, December 2, 1967 and a boy Michael James, May 12, 1971.

Laurence married a widow with 2 children; Judy Hodges in 1976. Chelleen was born January 17, 1960 and Chad Allen on August 14, 1972.

Eddie married Dianne Langhofer of Bonanza, Alberta in June, 1976. They have yet to bless us with grandchildren.

Les and Eddie both live in Bezanson and Laurence lives in Edmonton.

All three boys loved sports along with their father, who was a sports enthusiast, and that was most of our life other than farming and raising our family.

Harry is employed by the County and works at the County Work Shop. I am presently working at Ludbrook's gift store.

BERT OGDEN FAMILY — by Wauneita and children — January, 1977

Bert was born January 24, 1907 in Jollicure, New Brunswick, son of Frank and Minnie Ogden. He was the third oldest of 9 children.

Bert and Albert Tingley came west on a harvest excursion in 1926 and ended up in Grande Prairie, Alberta. They worked for Pete Moon, stooking. After stooking was done Albert went back to Calgary, Alberta. Bert worked on Ford's threshing outfit that fall. When they were threshing at Oll Patterson's, Oll asked Bert if he was going to stay here for the winter. He said, "There's one thing I want to tell you; if you stay one winter, you'll be here for a long time, you'll be too broke to leave and too tough to die". It didn't take Bert too many years to discover that he was right. Bert worked around the Bezanson area for 2 years, then in 1928, he rented the N.½ 3-72-3-W. 6 and started farming on his own. He bought this farm in 1944.



Wedding Nov. 20, 1935. Hazel Weegar, Margaret Moon, Wauneita and Bert Ogden, Vernon Patterson, Rupert Weegar, Rev. Stanley Hunt in-between bride and groom.

On November 20, 1935 Bert and I (Wauneita) were married. I was born in Clarke County, Iowa, U.S.A. to Grace and Rex Patterson in 1916. That same year my father took carloads of machinery, cattle, horses and household furnishings, going by train to Athabasa, and trekked in over the Trail. My mother, sister Hazel and I went by train. The trip from Edmonton, which took 3 days, was made on the second train going to Grande Prairie in April, 1916.

I only moved 1½ miles from home when I married and we have lived here ever since.

I started my schooling at the Presbyterian Church in Glen Leslie, which was being used as a school too, and went there for 4 years. The second winter, I stayed with Dorothy and Ed Leslie during the week and came home weekends. Mrs. Leslie was my teacher. My first teacher was Miss Ethel Turner. Then in 1925 I went to the Bezanson School for 4 years. I took one year of high school in Grande Prairie, boarding at Kenneth Morrison's (Dorothy Leslie's parents) and then, one year at the Bezanson Hall where high school was held. The teacher was Miss Dorothy Goodland, who taught 14 pupils in grades 9, 10 and 11. My schooling finished



Shirley Ogden and her friend ('Ring').

in the summer of 1931 as times were getting hard and money was scarce. For the next 4 years I stayed home and did housework, while my mother worked in the fields with my father. In the long winter evenings I learned to knit and helped card many fleeces of sheep's wool to be put into comforters for our beds.

When I was 10 years old, my father bought a piano from a cousin of his, who had brought it up from the U.S.A. I spent many happy hours, learning to play it. A few years after I was married, my parents gave it to me. I still have it and play often.

Bert and I have 3 children; Shirley (1936), Robert (1940) and Raymond (1945). They received their schooling at Bezanson and Grande Prairie. Wapiti Lodge (home for country students during the week) was built in Grande Prairie, so for their high school, they stayed there, coming home weekends.

When we got married, we had a wood cook stove and heater, homemade table and benches and washed clothes on the board. Later we had a hand washing machine, a gas powered one.

For our drinking water, Bert hauled ice from the Smoky or Wapiti Rivers — covered it with sawdust in a

For entertainment there was always a dance in the Bezanson Hall every second Friday, also card parties. We had a radio after a couple of years. Christmas concerts were the highlights of the year. Enjoyment was had from getting ready for them and then the climax — the night of the Do! I can remember how each of 5 schools would have their concerts on different nights of the week so we could enjoy theirs as well as ours. Later, 2 different years (once when school was held in the Bezanson Hall) they held their Christmas programs together in the Hall.

Now we have a consolidated school for grades 1 to 6 and the rest of the students are bussed to Sexsmith. For awhile they taught to grade 9 and one year to grade 11. Times have sure changed, progress so they say, but we have wonderful memories of the past ones.

I (Shirley) was born August 19, 1936, the only daughter of Bert and Wauneita. I have 2 younger brothers, Bob and Ray. I started to school when I was 6 years old, riding a pony called 'Nancy'. I had a number of different saddle ponies during my school days, one I especially liked — a sorrel with a white stripe in her face called 'Madge'.

The very first morning of my schooling was quite a highlight in my life. Some neighbour kids were to come by our place, on their way to school so I could go with them, but they were late coming, and I was anxious to get there, so I left by myself. It was 2½ miles to go, but seemed much farther all alone. After going about 1½ miles, I was beginning to wonder if I was on the right road, when in the distance, I saw another rider coming, and when we got together, I was so relieved, it was Helen McLaughlin, she was older and knew the way.

I went to this school for 6 years, then attended school at the Bezanson village for 3 years. My high school, I took at Grande Prairie.



40th wedding anniversary — Nov. 20, 1975, Bert and Wauneita Ogden, Linda and Raymond, Elmer and Shirley and Valetta Westergaard, Bob, Maureen, Beverley, Colline, Darlene, Kenny and Jody Ogden.

building to keep it from thawing. For wash water we hauled it by the barrel from dugouts or caught rain water off the roof. We used snow in the winter, melted it in a barrel by the heater.

I was an outdoor person and love sports, especially soft ball. I played with a number of teams during high school and afterwards.

After my schooling was finished, I worked at Hanson's Hardware. In the spring of 1958 I took a trip to Eastern Canada to visit some of my father's sisters and brothers and especially to see my Grandma Ogden. After spending a few months with them I went on to Indiana and farther south to Iowa, U.S.A. to visit a school chum of mine Shirley (Sherk) Henderson and also see some of my mother's relatives.

After returning home I found employment at the Bank of Montreal in Grande Prairie and worked there until I got married.

Elmer is the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Nels Westergaard of Charlie Lake, B.C. He grew up on a ranch with his parents, 3 sisters and 4 brothers. He took his high school at Ft. St. John, B.C.

Elmer and I were married in November, 1966. Our first home was at Jedny. While living there we had a daughter, Valetta, born in August, 1967. Later we lived at Ft. St. John, Wonowon, and presently are living at Ft. Nelson, B.C. Elmer is employed with Pacific Oil.

I (Bob) am the oldest son of Bert and Wauneita, born February 26, 1940. I started to school in the fall of 1946 with my older sister Shirley. My first teacher was Miss Phyllis Mattoon. I went to the old Bezanson school for 2 years then went to the Bezanson village school until I was through grade 9. I took some high school in Grande Prairie. When I left school, I went out to work in the bush for the winter, then worked at a lumber retail store. Soon, I started driving trucks and have done so ever since.

In March, 1961, I marrie Ellen, daughter of Hannah and Ken Palmer of Grande Prairie. We had 4 children; Beverley (December, 1961), Colline (February, 1963), Darlene (May, 1964), and Kenny (August, 1967). The children now live with their mother and step-father (Bruce Coleman) at Sexsmith, Alberta.



Raymond and Linda Ogden wedding, May 1969.



Raymond and Linda Ogden with their pony chuckwagon outfit — 1976.

In February, 1971, I married Maureen Barlow of Ft. Nelson, B.C. Maureen's mother and step-father — Ann and Dan Lewis live in Ft. Nelson. Maureen has 2 younger sisters, Susan and Brenda — both married.

We have a daughter Jody Lynne born July 19, 1973. We are living at Ft. Nelson.

Raymond met Linda, daughter of Adolph and Mary Sorken in 1967 and were married on May 17, 1969 in the Teepee Creek United Church. We make our home in Raymond's parents yard in a trailer. Raymond is the youngest son of Bert and Wauneita.

We have one quarter section of land in the Teepee Creek district. Ray is a steam engineer for North Canadian plywood plant, where he has worked since 1963.

In the summer we are racing, pony chuckwagon and pony chariots from Valleyview, Alberta to Ft. Nelson, B.C.

ALFRED OLSON FAMILY STORY — by Carol (Waldner) Adams — March, 1977

Born in Wamhus, Sweden, Alfred Olson left his home in 1910 to come to the U.S.A. While he was working in the Los Angeles area, he met and worked with Nels Meyers. Unable to make up their mind about which way to go, Alfred decided to throw his boot in the air and follow the direction the toe pointed. The shoe landed pointing north east. The two young men arrived in the Bezanson district via the Grouard Trail in the spring of 1912.

Alfred's carpenter skills were put to use that year building the main part of his first home, the shell of which is still standing. As more people came into the area, Mr. Olson was often a willing volunteer helping his new neighbors to build their homes. He was also part of the work force who constructed gathering places, such as the original hall, which burned down in 1949, and the Glen Leslie Church, which is a standing monument to the fine workmanship of the community members. In later years, he built the Ben Foster



Christmas at the Olson home. Gordon, Edna, Violet, Elsie, Don, Alice, Inga, Alfred and Angie.

residence in Sexsmith (1926-27) and helped with the present Bezanson Community Hall, built in 1950.

In the early part of 1916, Alfred attended a dance in Grande Prairie where he met Miss Inga Bredeson. Inga had come from Minnesota by train to Edson and by sleigh, over the Edson Trail to Grande Prairie in early 1915. The Bredeson family were living in Sexsmith.



Olson's log house built by Alfred in 1912.

They were married later in 1916 by Rev. Forbes at his private residence in Grande Prairie. The young couple set up housekeeping in the log house at Bezanson. They were to eventually raise 7 children in the 3 room log house — Edna, Elsie, Violet, Angie, Don, Gordon and Alice.

Tragedy struck the Olson household when Edna, Elsie and their first son, baby Edwin came down with whooping cough. The 6 week old baby succumbed to



Inga with 'Lady and Johnny'.

the dreaded disease and was buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery in June, 1927.

Life on the farm meant much hard work, but the family recalls many good times. Mr. Olson was a carpenter by trade, but he also trapped and hunted. Alice recalls having to share the house with skins hanging to dry. Alfred brushed the land by hand and broke the fertile ground with oxen. Entertainment was not lavish or extravagant, but nobody minded. Mrs. Olson recalls going to dances where Mr. Olson played the accordion, and her not missing a dance. 'Everybody danced with Everybody'. Edna recalls herself and Elsie singing during supper breaks. There was also much visiting among neighbours.

The Olson house was the scene of many dances and, in fact, 3 of the Olson girls; Edna, Violet and Angie, held their wedding receptions at home. In the early days, Inga recalls making frequent trips to the old Bezanson Townsite for supplies with a single horse buggy. Later, in the 30's they had a team of sorrel horses, Johnny and Lady, who acquired a reputation for pulling out stuck vehicles, in particular, the mail truck.

Edna, the oldest of the children, married Carl Flohr and resided in several Peace country towns in the early part of their marriage. When Carl's work took him up the Alaska Highway, Edna lived back on the farm with her young family. The Flohrs raised 5 children; Alvin, Eddie, Larry, Ivan and Marlene. Edna's gift is cake decorating. Her talent is well known and her wedding cakes have gone as far as England and Hawaii. The Flohrs presently live in Grande Prairie.

The second eldest, Elsie worked for the Rays in Beaverlodge. It was here she met Bob Ray, who enlisted in the Army. They were married in Nanaimo, B.C., where Bob was stationed. Elsie did her part for the war effort by going to work in an aeroplane factory as a riveter. Bob and Elsie have 2 sons, Lyle and Barry.

Violet married Bill Griffiths, a mechanic from Grande Prairie. The Olson girls recall Vi making all their clothes, and Violet is still satisfying customers with her fine workmanship. Bill's work has taken them to many places in Alberta and B.C. They now live in Nanaimo, B.C. They have 4 daughters; Gayle, Judy, Cindy and Bonnie.



Don Olson with some of his Taxidermy work.

Angie married Walter Waldner, a young horseman from Clairmont. They were married in Grande Prairie and have lived and worked in the area ever since. In 1957 they purchased the family farm, where they still reside. Walter has always enjoyed working with horses and now enjoys something he has always wanted to do — own harness horses. Walter has travelled all over Alberta with his 2 registered pacers to drive in races. Angie enjoys the horses with her husband and also sews for her family. They have 2 children — Carol and Darrel.



Walter Waldner harness racing at Peace River (son-in-law of Alf Olson).

Don was the last one to marry. He married Maxine McColm, a teacher whom he met while she was instructing at the Bezanson school. They now reside in Grande Prairie, where he has followed in his father's footsteps and to become a successful self-employed carpenter. Many people Don grew up with will remember him as being an excellent taxidermist. He still has some of his trophies. Don and Maxine have 3 children; Tammy, Trent and Terrill.

Gordon married Glenda Franks, a young girl from Goodwin. Gordon's brothers and sisters remember him best having his hand under the hood of the family vehicle. At the age of 16 he went to SAIT to study for his mechanic certificate. He received it when he was 19. All his hard work has paid off, as he has a partner and they have a thriving service station business. He and Glenda have 5 children — Janice, Karen, Darlene, Brian and Rhonda.

Alice married a local guy, Tyke Ames. Tyke is a welder by trade and is an avid horsehoe pitcher, a hobby that has given him several trophies. Allie's gaining an excellent reputation as a seamstress. They have lived in Bezanson all their lives and have raised 4 daughters — Louise, Beverly, Irene and Colleen.

Christmas, 1952 Inga and Alfred moved to a new 5 bedroom home, just east of the original building site. In 1957 they moved to Grande Prairie, where Alfred worked with Don building houses. Alfred also enjoyed river boating with his sons, making several trips up the Smoky River, during this time in his life. Inga who had always sewed for her own family, then started sewing for others. Her work included complete wedding ensembles, square dance outfits and she also altered clothes for clothing stores. Mr. and Mrs. Olson's natural talent of making something from nothing has passed on to all their children, who are all very good with their hands.



Alfred Olson and son, Gordon, going up the Smoky River.

In 1962, Alfred again built Inga a home. It was at this modern house in Grande Prairie where Alfred passed away. He was 79 years of age and is remembered by family and friends as a very private person, but always a good neighbor. Mrs. Alfred Olson enjoys a very active and independent life in her home to this day.

Today, one of Inga's most vivid memories of this area opening up, was the driving of the Golden Spike, bringing the rest of the country to Grande Prairie.

CHARLIE PARRISH STORY — by Mildred Parrish — January, 1977

Charles W. Parrish was born in Oregon, U.S.A., March, 1881 and his wife Myrtle E. Panta was born November 26, 1879. They were married in 1905. They bought a ranch, where Mr. Parrish ranched and drove freight wagons. They sold their ranch and came to Canada, arriving in southern Alberta in 1913. They lived in various places, finally settling in the Bezanson, Alberta area in 1929.

They had a family of 8; 3 boys and 5 girls. Laurence — 1907, Florence — 1909, Allie — 1911, Myron — 1912. These 4 were born in Oregon. In southern Alberta, 4 more children were born; Eleanor — 1914, Emory — 1916, Luella — 1918 and Velna — 1920. Florence did not come with them, she stayed in Edmonton and worked there.



Charlie Parrish house on the Flats by the Smoky River.



Charlie and Myrtle Parrish in Senior Citizens duplex in Edmonton.

At first they lived on the Cannon place (S.W. 24-71-3-W. 6) and then moved to the (N.E. 24-71-3-W. 6). They farmed, worked in logging camps and did bush work. They worked at Moon's mill along the Wapiti river. Mr. and Mrs. Parrish built a house on the river flat by the Smoky River (N.W. 28-71-2-W. 6) and moved there, but since it was too far from school the children lived in their other house, and went to school at Bezanson. They farmed a lot of land by now in summer and did lots of bush work in winter.



Myron and Ada (Carpenter) Parrish.



May 1967 — 4 generations: Mrs. Charlie Parrish (87), Laurence, Helen Fenton and Tracy Fenton.



Allie (Parrish) and Ed Douglas.

Laurence married Mildred Patterson of Bezanson in November, 1934.

Myron married Ada Carpenter of the Five Mile district in December, 1935. They have 4 children; Sheila, Georgia, Melvin and Myrtle. They farmed in Bezanson for a number of years and then moved to Oregon, U.S.A.

Emory married Audrey O'Brien of Five Mile and had 9 children.



Eleanor (Parrish) and Carl Wittigg.



Florence (Parrish) and Arnold Suvan.

Luella married Charlie Dorschied of Crystal Creek and shortly after he went to World War II. He was killed overseas. Later Luella married Howard Johnson. They have 4 children.

Velna married Earl Dorschied (brother of Charlie) in 1940. He also joined the service but did not go overseas. They lived in Glen Leslie. They have 3 children.

Florence married Arnold Suvan and live in Edmonton. They have 5 children.

Allie married Jim McQuade and live in Edmonton. They have 3 children.

Eleanor married Carl Wittigg and live in Washington, U.S.A. They have 3 girls.

Mr. and Mrs. C. Parrish moved to Edmonton, lived in a rented home for awhile and then in a Senior Citizens Home. They lived there until Mr. Parrish died February, 1962. Mrs. Parrish went to a nursing home in Edmonton and lived there until her death in July, 1969.

DALE PARRISH STORY — by Dale — March, 1977

I, Dale, son of Mildred and Laurence Parrish was born in the Grande Prairie Hospital July 24, 1936. I started school at the age of 7 at the old Bezanson school. My first teacher was Mrs. Grace Ferris.

From the time I was 11 years old, until I quit school, my parents moved (temporarily) to Moon's mill for the winters to log. I helped after school and on weekends.

In 1952, I went logging and driving a sleigh with 4 horses. In spring, I helped put crop in by driving an outfit of horses.

In 1955, my parents, 3 sisters and myself moved to Ymir, B.C., where my father and I logged, then we moved to Rossland, B.C. for 4 years, after which my parents, one sister and I moved back to Bezanson.

While I was at Rossland I met Margaret Best, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Best. On August 3, 1968 we were married at Rossland. We came back to Bezanson, bought a trailer and moved it on my father's farm (S.W. 29-71-2-W. 6). We lived there until 1972 when my father passed away, then we moved into the house and my mother took the trailer to live in as I bought the farm.

We are blessed with 2 girls; Karen born July 2, 1969 and Gale on March 11, 1971 and one son born March 3, 1974, named William.

EMORY PARRISH STORY — by Emory — February, 1977

I (Emory) was born March, 1916 the third son of Charles and Myrtle Parrish in southern Alberta. I was living with my parents, brothers and sisters at Sedgewick, Alberta.



Emory and Audrey Parrish.

In the fall of 1929, the fields in Central Alberta, where my dad farmed, started to blow away, so he decided to go to Lesser Slave Lake and put up hay and ship it to the dried out farmers. There was lots of hay at Driftpile, but by the time they got to cutting it, there came a big frost and ruined the hay, so that fell through, leaving our Dad in a bad financial state. But he had some good horses, so he was able to get a job logging for McRae's Lumber in Driftpile. I was a boy of 13 and there wasn't any school, so Dad let me drive the jammer team, loading logs. It was sure hard work but I loved it.

In the spring of 1930, Dad decided to go on to the Peace River country. We drove over land to McLennan and shipped from there by train. Mother and 3 of the girls stayed at Driftpile until we got settled. We loaded the horses and equipment in the boxcars. In one car we

had it half full of horses, had machinery, etc. in the other half. We nailed some planks across the centre of the car to keep the horses in place. There was Dad, Laurence, Myron and myself and 3 other young men that worked for Dad — Morris Stewart, Toots Griff and Lester Jobson, all came together. We had our beds made in the doorway of the boxcar. In the middle of the night, when we were all asleep, the train crew started making up the load, backed into cars so hard, that it knocked the horses into those planks and they got right in almost on top of us, but lucky for us nobody was hurt. So that is the way we headed for Grande Prairie, Alberta.

We arrived there around the first of May, 1930. As we were late arrivals, most of the good land was taken, already. Dad went south of town looking for land but it didn't suit him, Norman Moon was in the land selling business at that time, he told Dad that Jimmie Oliver had a half section of land at Bezanson, where the Wapiti and Smoky Rivers merge, for sale so Dad bought this land. As there were no buildings on the land Norman Moon let us live on the Cannon place, where there was a house, until we could get a house built.

That fall as all old-timers know, was the starting of the depression. In the fall of 1930 I started to school in grade 7 along with my sisters. My teacher was Miss Martha Gudlaugson. The next year my teacher was Miss Betty Willetts who later became Mrs. Fred Moon. She was a real good teacher with high ideals. There were lots of real good boys and girls in our district. When I finished grade school, there wasn't much chance to go to high school so I stayed home and helped Dad for awhile.

For recreation, there was the old Bezanson Hall, where nearly every Friday night there was a dance. We all had some wonderful times there.

Along about 1936 we met the O'Brien family, they lived in the Five Mile School district. They had 5 children. Audrey was the second oldest.

In the spring of 1939 Audrey and I were married. We bought the old Cannon Place and started farming.

Times were pretty tough still. I did a little trading in horses, etc., to try and better myself, but there wasn't much money floating around. One incident I will tell about. Morris Stewart, probably the best horseman in the country at the time, had been over to Laurence's and traded for a dandy little sorrel mare. He was coming back by our place, setting up on the spring seat on the wagon, admiring this sorrel mare and maybe gloating a little as to how he beat old Laurence on a horse trade, which was pretty hard to do, if you ask me. Anyway something scared her and she went down over a hill and out in a slough before Morris could catch his wind. The exact words he said were, "What the h. . . have I got now?"

Audrey and I have quite a large family. We had 3 boys — Marcel, Charles, and Gary, then 4 girls — Gloria, Ginger, Karen and Sharlene, all born in the Grande Prairie Hospital, except Karen who was born at home in Bezanson, February 27, 1947 during a real cold, bad spell. We had a nurse from the district, Mrs. Florence Haworth come over, and between her and my Dad, they delivered a fine tiny baby girl. She was very tiny and had to keep her in an apple box by the cook stove, all wrapped up, almost like an incubator. A funny little thing happened at the time. Albert Menard was staying at our place helping with the chores. After the baby was tucked away, Dad, Albert and I were standing by the cook stove, when Albert keeled over in a faint, I guess it was just too much for him. From Bezanson we moved to the Prince George area in B.C. There we had 2 more sons, Jim and Stanley.

Now in 1977 I am still doing bush work along with some of our sons, Charles, Gary and Jim.

All our children are married and have families of their own. Marcel lives in Edmonton, Alberta. Charles, Gary, Jim and Ginger all live close by. Gloria and her husband Stan live at West Bank in the Okanagan Valley in B.C. Karen lives in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory.

LAURENCE PARRISH STORY — by Mildred Parrish — January, 1977

Laurence was born March 4, 1907 in Oregon, U.S.A. He was the oldest son of Myrtle and Charles Parrish. He married Mildred, second daughter of Guy and Bertha Patterson, who was born February 2, 1915.

We lived on Laurence's father's place (S.E. 13-71-3-W. 6) for a short time and then went to the Turner place (S.E. 15-72-4-W. 6) for a couple of years. Dale was born in 1936 and Janet in 1938. We moved to Laurence's homestead (S.E. 4-71-3-W. 6). Sylvia was born in 1940 and Helen in 1944.



Mildred and Laurence Parrish.

Our house burned down in August, 1944. A kind neighbor, Butch McFadzen went to the merchants of Grande Prairie and got all kinds of blankets and useful things for us to start again. We got a house from Morris Stewart and moved it on to our place to live in. We bought a half section (S.½ 29-71-2-W. 6) which had been a school section and was now for sale. We farmed

in Bezanson for a number of years and then in 1955 we moved to southern B.C., where we had a logging business. We lived there for 10 or 11 years then we came back to Bezanson once again. Morris Stewart sold his farm and we bought the house, he had been living in, and moved it onto the school land we owned. It is situated on the S.W. corner. We lived here farming in the summer and logging in the winter until Laurence became ill in the spring of 1971. He died in March, 1972 and I went to live in a trailer. I bought 2 lots in the village of Bezanson and that is where my home is. My son Dale and his family live on the farm, where we used to live.

Dale married Margaret Best of Rossland, B.C. They have 3 children. Janet married Ralph Dalberg, June, 1957, they have 3 children; Susan, 1958, Wanda, 1959 and Duane, 1962. They live on Vancouver Island now.

Sylvia married John Bruno, July, 1961. They have 3 children; Tammy, 1962, Kimberly, 1964 and Robert in 1969. They live at Rossland, B.C.

Helen married Bruce Fenton and they have 2 children, Tracy and Brian, and live at Bezanson, Alberta.

(BAXTER) REX PATTERSON STORY — by daughter Wauneita Ogden — March, 1976

Rex was born December 23, 1884 to Baxter Davis and Julia Patterson at Sullivan, Illinois, U.S.A. In 1896 the family moved to Iowa, where they farmed. Rex's mother died after having 5 boys and 1 girl in 1901. In 1904 when Rex was 20 years old he married Mable Murphy and one year later mother died at childbirth. On September 2, 1908 he married Grace Isobel McCartney (daughter of Ed and Celia McCartney). She was born October 19, 1891. She had 2 sisters — Agnes and Pauline and 2 brothers — Vern and Harold. She was the eldest in the family. On August 9, 1910 a daughter Hazel was born. In 1911 they pioneered to Saskatchewan, in Canada and farmed near a little town called Unity. They only stayed there a couple of years and then went back to Iowa, but the pioneer spirit was still with them and in February, 1916 just after another daughter, Wauneita was born (February 6,), they started out again. However, my Dad and his father and brothers went on ahead with boxcars of machinery and horses, etc., and also windows and doors for their new home, which was being built by a cousin, Ott Patterson, who had also pioneered into the Peace River Country in Alberta (Glen Leslie area) 2 years before. They went by rail to High Prairie, Alberta and from there they loaded their belongings on sleighs pulled by horses and started out. They crossed the Smoky River, where the bridge is now at Moody's Crossing, on the ice. The ferry was at the old Bezanson Townsite at that time. They landed at Glen Leslie, Alberta (S.W.¼ 3-72-3-W. 6) March 13, 1916. On the second train that came to Grande Prairie, Alberta, the wives and children and also Rex's father came. It took 3 days to come by train from Edmonton, Alberta to Grande Prairie. At Dunvegan we had to walk and carry our luggage and the little ones down the long hill. We then crossed the Smoky River by boat, and then walked up the other side and boarded the train that had



Mrs. Rex Patterson holding daughter, Wauneita, in front of Thomas Leslie's post office — April 29, 1916.

come from Spirit River, to take us to Grande Prairie — arriving April 20. We were met by the men and drove with horses, buggies and wagons to our new homes.

Mom and Dad'd house was a lumber one 14' x 20', while the others were log, with sod roofs. The first winter, 14 people lived in our house as it was the only one that didn't leak and was warm enough. A little kitchen was added to the main house the first year.

On November 28, 1916 the first meeting in the district was held in their home by the Ladies of the Forbes Presbyterian Church from Grande Prairie. Some of the ladies present were; Mrs. Alexander Forbes, Mrs. Keys, Mrs. Dan (Mayme) Minchin, Mrs. Ross (Annie) Wales, Grandma Moon (mother of Annie Wales) and others.

More rooms were added to the house (2 bedrooms) in 1918 and again in 1926 (living room and another bedroom), to its present size. During the first summer of living there, a log barn was built for the animals. The lumber for the roof was acquired from Edmond



Getting started on an addition on our home in 1925. Hazel, Mrs. Patterson holding Ken, Philip Rochon, Fred Moon, Vernon, Milfred, and Wauneita Patterson.

Cook, who had a saw mill south of Grande Prairie, across the Wapiti River.

My father and grandfather, Bill Kennedy, and Nels Myers went to get it. They built 3 rafts, 2 to carry the lumber and 1 for the slabs. They piled their lumber and slabs on and started taking them down the Wapiti River, on to the Smoky River and were going to load them on wagons at Moody's Crossing. However, near the Bezanson Townsite they landed on a sand bar. Finally they got 1 load off and 2 of the men took it down and 2 of them stayed with the remaining lumber and slabs. The next day, after the 1 load was sent home by wagon, they came back and got the rest of the lumber. The slabs were left until winter, when they could haul them on the ice.

Three sons were born to my folks, Vernon (1917), Milfred (1921) and Kenneth (1925), also another baby boy (Clarence) in (1923) who only lived a few hours.

School was held in the Presbyterian log church, which was built in 1915 — three miles west of our place. Hazel, Vernon and I went there. In the fall of 1925 we went to the Bezanson school — 3 miles east and 1½ miles south. However, during the Christmas holidays this school was moved 1½ miles closer, then it was 2 miles east and 1 mile south. Here Milfred and Kenneth went to school, too.

Times were hard but we always had enough to eat. Ice was cut and hauled from the rivers on sleighs in the winter, for cooking and drinking in the summer. It was stored in a building, each layer of ice being covered with sawdust. Firewood was plentiful for the stoves. The men cut down green poplar trees, sawed them with a buck saw and split and piled them and let them dry. Later on they used a wood sawing machine.

Coal oil lamps and lanterns and candles were used for light. Years later we had gas lamps and oh what a good light that was. Then in 1953, we had electric ones, but this was long after I was married and away from home.



50th Anniversary. Mr. and Mrs. Rex Patterson and friends, Charlie and Pearl Moon.



Rex and Grace Patterson celebrate their 50th anniversary — Sept. 2/58.

We raised turkeys and chickens so we had our own eggs and lots of fried chicken — turkeys were kept for treats, like Christmas, Thanksgiving and birthdays. Big gardens were grown and there was an abundance of wild fruit for the picking — strawberries, raspberries, saskatoons, cranberries and blueberries. Thousands of people picked blueberries and cranberries from the blueberry flats by the Smoky River.

Visiting in the early days was from near and far. Dances were held in the old Bezanson Hall after it was built in 1923 on Bill Kennedy's homestead, just across the road from our home. It burned down many years later and a new one was built 1 mile east and 2 miles

north of the old one. There was many a good time held in that old hall, and almost every year while it was there, there would be a community picnic.

My folks celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1958 with a good many of their friends and relatives coming there to wish them happiness and many more years together. They did have many more happy years together and they were able to celebrate their 60th in 1968 and one more in 1969.

My folks made many trips back to Iowa to visit old friends there and also to see many of their relatives but they never had any desire to go back there to live. Glen Leslie or Bezanson as their district is now called, was always their home until they couldn't take care of it and themselves, and then they went to live at a Senior Citizen Home — Pioneer Lodge in Grande Prairie, Alberta in 1969.

Seven months later my mother died (December 17) and is buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery. My father lived on there at Pioneer Lodge until his death, March 12, 1974.



Ken and Laura Patterson with Ken's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Rex Patterson.

KENNETH PATTERSON STORY — January, 1977

I was born March 2, 1925 at Bezanson, Alberta. I am the youngest son of Rex and Grace Patterson. I had 2 brothers, Vernon and Milfred and 2 sisters, Hazel and Wauneita.

My brother, Milfred and I rode horseback to the Bezanson school. In 1937 I stayed with my sister Hazel and her family, to take their son Earl to school. I would go home weekends.

In the fall of 1945, my dad (Rex Patterson) bought a half section of land (S.½ 28-71-5-W. 6) 4 miles east of Grande Prairie, Alberta, from his brother Ernie Patterson. They sold out and went back to Iowa, U.S.A.

In the spring of 1946 my dad and mother and I moved up there. Milfred stayed on the farm at Bezanson and he and Vernon (who was just back from overseas — World War II — and had land near) did the farming there.

On December 6, 1946 I married Laura (daughter of Jerome and Lillian Norton) of Bezanson.

The first winter I worked for Grande Prairie Lumber and the second winter we went to Norton's mill.

We have 3 children — Barbara (1950), Ernie (1953) and Donna (1955). My folks moved back to Bezanson on their old farm and we took over the farming on the land near Grande Prairie, Alberta. Later we bought the farm and lived there until 1958 when we sold out and moved to Grande Prairie. I worked for the Water Department in town for a number of years, then for the school board doing janitor work. Later I was a security guard for Canfor (lumber division). Almost 2 years ago we moved to Grande Cache, Alberta.



1956 — Barbara, Donna and Ernie Patterson.

Barbara married Rodney Frederickson — January 4, 1969. They have 2 children; Michael (1969) and Deanna (1972). Rod does dry-walling and they live at Kelowna, B.C.

Ernie married Caryn Moore (a widow with 2 children — Teresa and Jason) and they have 2 more boys — Keith and Kevin. Ernie is doing dry-walling, in Edmonton where they are living now.

Donna married Bob Sexton May 21, 1976. Bob is working for a Firestone plant in Edmonton, Alberta, where they are living.

MILFRED PATTERSON STORY — by Milfred — January, 1977

I, (Milfred) was born at home, October 1, 1921 at Bezanson (post office was Glen Leslie) the second son of Rex and Grace Patterson.

I went to school at Bezanson, 2 miles east and 1 mile south of where I was born until 1935 when I had passed my grade 8. School in those days was a one room school and nine grades — sure kept the teacher busy teaching all of us and keeping order. During noon and recesses we played games. Always took our lunch with us, ate it fast so we had more time to play. After I finished school I worked with Dad on the farm until I married.

For entertainment there was always dances to go to — Bezanson, Crystal Creek and Five Mile, etc. They

were held every Friday night. Also in the summer there were ball games — many of them were played right near our house in a small pasture.

On May 1, 1946 I married Edith, eldest daughter of Fred and Edna Ames of Bezanson. My folks had moved to Five Mile District shortly before we were married and I was looking after the home farm, and when we were married we lived there that summer. That fall we bought a little house from Mrs. Jensen and moved it to my brother-in-law's farm (Bert Ogden — N.E. 3-72-3-W. 6). We lived there until the summer of 1956. For 3 winters we went to the mill.

We have 5 children; Linda (1947), Dianne (1950), Elaine (1952), Gerald (1954) and Larry (1959).



Edith, Milfred, Linda, Gerald, Elaine, Dianne and Larry Patterson.

The summer of 1952 after being at the bush for the winter we worked for Charlie Moore.

In 1953, I started general trucking and have been doing so ever since. In 1956, we moved our house on to our own quarter section (S.E. 3-72-3-W. 6) and built on to it, to its present size.

Linda married Elvin Cage, October 22, 1965. They have 2 boys — Darin (1966), and Calvin (1970). They live about 12 miles southwest of Beaverlodge on a farm.

Dianne married Brian Fowler, August 25, 1973. They live in Edmonton.

Elaine married Roger Carle, June 24, 1972. They have one son Trevor (March 3, 1976). They live in St. Albert, Alberta.

Gerald married Pat Moshall, May 22, 1976. They live in Edmonton, Alberta.

Larry is still living at home.

PATTERSON-WEEGAR STORY — told by Allie Weegar — March, 1977

Vernon (Bud) Patterson, born August 22, 1917, was the eldest son of Rex and Grace (McCartney) Patterson.

In the spring of 1928 his maternal grandparents, Edward and Celia McCartney of Omaha, Nebraska visited for 5 months at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Rex Patterson. It was during their stay, Bud broke his arm and leg in a farm accident. Because of this injury, he was unable to participate in active sports for some time, but he did become an expert horseman. Bud's first love, a little sorrel mare, Nancy, took him to school; also carried him to many prizes in the "Barrel" and "Pony" races. In his late teens Nancy was with him on his "courting" sprees, and had enough horse sense to keep silent during the prolonged "Goodbyes".



Vernon Patterson, 1942.

The "Horse" was king in those days. Boys from age 8-80 bragged about their horses. Many pony races and team pulling matches took place, around the dinner table, around the old heater stove or in the stag line at dances.

In his youth, Bud's pals were the McLaughlin, Moon and Stark brothers, and their hair raising escapades would fill a book. Wedding bells and war broke up this high spirited, fun-loving gang.

In 1939, Bud bought the Archie Minchin quarter (S.W. 34-71-3-W. 6.). The following November, Bud and I (Allie LaValley) were married and started farming on our own. Bud enlisted January, 1942, went overseas that May, served in Sicily, Italy, France, Holland and Germany. He returned December, 1945, and was very happy to get back to family and farming.

We had 3 children; David was born May 29, 1942, Keith on April 16, 1947 and daughter Valerie born September 19, 1948 to complete our family.

During the next 13 years Bud farmed and was active in community projects, his favorite was the Bezanson Stampede. At the age of 40, on August 1st, 1958, a farm accident took his life. The kindness and the help of the whole neighborhood, after the tragedy, will never be forgotten by the family.

Shortly after the funeral, a crew of over 80 neighbors pulled into the farmstead to haul and stack tons and tons of hay bales for us. Their wonderful wives supplied and served 2 big delicious meals to the hungry men that day.

The following July, the Stampede Committee and audience, at the start of the program, stood for a moment of silence in honour of the memory of Teddy Rycroft and Bud Patterson. We felt, again, a great sense of humble gratitude toward the people of our community.



David, Keith, Valerie Patterson, Allie and Earl Weegar, Annette in front.

Earl Weegar took over the management of the farm. He received his schooling at Bezanson, Debolt, and Lindsay. Like most youths of the late 40's he worked in sawmills, drove 'Cats' for oil companies and farmed with his father.

Earl received a bonus of a 'ready made teenage family" with our marriage on November 30, 1960. Four years later he became a very young, proud grandpa.

At this time brother, Harvey Weegar, and Keith took over the farming operation and Earl went into commercial trucking for the next 10 years.

Earl and I have enjoyed working with our neighbors on community projects. We served on Hall, Bezanson Stampede, Home and School and Legion Committees over the past years.

On March 30, 1966, our little daughter, Annette Marie was born. David and Rhea (Cadeau) Patterson live in Lumby, B.C. Their 4 children are; Sandra, Cathy, James and Lisa.

Our daughter Vallerie and husband, Terry Williamson live in Leduc. Their children are Pari Lynn and Michael.

Keith does the farming and lives at home. Annette attends the Bezanson Elementary school.

Life is great! Thanks to Earl's rare sense of humor there are very few dull moments at our place. We enjoy good health, family and friends and as the old song goes — "Who could ask for anything more?"

EDWARD PECKHAM STORY — by Nora Newman — January, 1977

Mr. Edward Peckham, his wife Elizabeth, and their 3 daughters; Muriel 19 years, Nora 18 years, and Gladys almost 16 years old, left their home in Surrey, England, and arrived in Bezanson late in June, 1928 to take up land under the Soldier Settlement Board's "3000 family scheme" for British soldiers of the First World War. They had been 5 days on board ship and 4 or 5 more on the train, not to mention a muddy trip out to the farm, and so were indeed glad to arrive at last. They were determined to accept this new way of life, learn as much as they could, and build a new home in what to us, looked like a veritable wilderness.

They had seen the landscape change many times from the train windows, as they came across Canada from Montreal, one day it would look wooded, with huge trees, beautiful, but discouraging, next it would be so rocky and rough, they would be in despair. Then came the Prairies, rolling, with vast distances and fields of grain. On their arrival at their destination, they found they owned 320 acres of a mixture of all these things, some woods, some open, 70 acres of crop land and a fair sprinkling of rocks as well.

They soon became acquainted with their new neighbours, as it seemed customary for whole families to drop in unexpectedly, and take pot-luck, even at times fetching along something to round it all out, like luscious pies, a cake or chicken, etc.

Mr. Peckham, having been a church goer, and a deacon in the Baptist Chapel in England, missed his observance of Sunday very much, and so evolved, among those who also missed their church services, a series of Sunday services, held in various homes in the district, so that all could attend, at least when it was close to home. He preached this way for several years, till roads improved, and a minister could come from Grande Prairie.

In that first year, they obtained, through the Soldier Settlement Board a milk cow, 4 horses and the absolute minimun of machinery required to start farm-



Edward Peckham and 2 great-grandchildren, Brent and Barbara Abbott.

ing, and with many mistakes, and a great deal of help and advice from neighbours and friends, they proceeded to make a living.

This was 1929, the year of the "crash" and the beginning of the depression, so a living was all they were destined to make, but in those days game was plentiful, as indeed were kindly hunters, who thought nothing of sharing their bounty with those who were less fortunate, and small game such as prairie chicken, partridge, etc., was easy to get. Those who had a surplus of garden shared it too. Eggs were traded for tea or sugar and everyone picked wild berries. So many things to learn! Just every day things, like using an axe to clear land and get in firewood, how to preserve the fruits and vegetables and cure or can the meat before the hot weather came, even shopping, for they could no longer run to the store for odds and ends. One item of great change was the "mail order catalogue", a truly great Canadian institution in those far flung pioneer days.

In 1931, both Muriel and Nora were married. Muriel married Mr. Frank Claussen and they moved to Dawson Creek, B.C. Later they went to the coast, where Frank took up the life of a fisherman. They raised a big family of four boys and nine girls, and now live in Athabaska, Alberta.

Nora married a neighbor and lived on a farm close by. She married Oliver Menard and they had three children; Albert, Claire and Laura.

The Peckhams farmed actively for ten years, after which they sold their farm to Art Rees, now the husband of Gladys. Art and Gladys had two girls; Janet, who still resides in Bezanson with her husband, Dale Woolsey and family, and Gwen with her husband, Larry Loewen and their family at Debolt.

Mr. and Mrs. Peckham continued to live in their house, Art Rees having built a new one in the yard. Mr. Peckham worked at various jobs in the neighbourhood. He then worked as helper in the Bezanson Co-op Store, and when the Goodwin Co-op Store at Goodwin, Alberta, across the Smoky River, needed a manager, he took over and they moved to Goodwin. The store was later sold and Mr. and Mrs. Peckham moved back to their little house on the farm. They celebrated their Golden Wedding in 1958, Mrs. Art Rees (Gladys) holding an Open House in their honor and many good friends coming to offer them good wishes and help them celebrate. Mrs. Peckham lived only a year after this and died in 1959. Mr. Peckham, then went to stay in Powell River, B.C., where Muriel and her family were living. At the age of 78 he moved back to Grande Prairie, and passed away in 1964 at the age of 79 years.

CHARLES OTTO PESCHELL FAMILY

Mr. Charles Peschell homesteaded the S.W. 31-71-2-W. 6 in the Bezanson district. Mr. and Mrs. Peschell were of German descent. They had two children; George and Violet. The children went to the Bezanson school. Charles worked out among the farmers to help supplement the farm. They were only here for a few years. Their house burned down in 1926 and so they sold what they salvaged and then sold the farm to Jack Haworth, who had just come with his wife from England.

JACK ROBERTS

Jack farmed near Jack Haworth's (N.E. 30-71-2-W. 6). It used to be Jack Lupton's homestead. Later he moved to where the original Bezanson school used to be. He had a wife Elsie and two daughters but they had gone back east to live. One time they came up to visit him. Jack lived there near Ed. Allens until his passing in 1955.



Jack Roberts.

THE ROCHON STORY — written by Gladys (Erno) Rochon — 1976

Joseph Philip Rochon was born August 23, 1906 in Alfred, Ontario but was better known as "Phil". He was the only son of Mary Georgina (Derocher) and Joseph Rochon. His father was born at Hull, Quebec, June 16, 1886 and was raised in a Catholic Convent. His mother was born at Alfred, Ontario, May 14, 1866. She died in 1931. They all left Thunder Bay, which was called Fort William at that time on April 2, 1917. It was a journey of 16 days by immigration freight train, from starting point to Grande Prairie, where Phil's father homesteaded in the Bezanson area. (S.E. 32-71-2-W. 6). They travelled six days and nights from Edmonton to Grande Prairie. The spring thaw had started and the rail bed was far from being smooth, allowing the rails to squish water back along the windows of the train to the extent that no one could see out. The rails would often drop and it caused the wheels to slip from the tracks. While the train crew were re-setting the wheels, Phil remembers, he and his young friends would go squirrel hunting until they heard the signal from the friendly conductor. All they owned were sling shots and he can't remember getting too many. One of Phil's best friends was a fellow by the name of Maurice Pronovost and over the years to come, had hunted deer, moose, bear and every game bird known to inhabit the area. It took a week to settle their land claims and shop for necessities for homesteading before they set out by team to their homestead. It took all day to reach their destination, owing to the fact of swollen creeks, bogs and windfalls once they hit the wooded area. There were no drinking water stops along the way so they drank from sloughs and creeks; fighting mosquitoes all the way. After settling down they still had not located water. They had to haul it from a spring located on the old Bezanson Townsite, which has long since been a ghost town; all the buildings have been torn down and hauled away.



Philip and Gladys Rochon.

The post office and general store were owned by Mr. Kenneth Morrison, who later moved to Grande Prairie, where he again became a store owner.

The Priest in the area was Father Harts. He held services in an old vacant house. There were no other men of the cloth in the area at this time. The old townsite consisted of two livery barns, a dance hall, P. M. Bezanson's home and a flour mill. There was a Presbyterian Church on the hill above the townsite. Here, Miss Ida Colby was the teacher. She later married Fred Dewhirst, a fellow Phil later worked for. Although he can't remember all the names of pupils attending at that time, some were Roy and Florence Stewart, Ivon Morrison, George and Irene Colby, Ernie Porier and Hazel Lupton. They played basketball and baseball and there were dances and house parties for students and their parents; it was entertainment for all. This school house was later moved by Pat Rooney for a store where the Bezanson store is today. The P. M. Bezanson house was later moved by Mr. Albinati to his farm by steam engine. It was a well-built home with oak floors. It had four bedrooms. Phil started working very young, he worked for Norman Moon for 4 years and Rex Patterson for two years. Finally he left farm work to tend bar at the Murray Hotel in Grande Prairie in 1928 (run by Norman Moon.) Later that year he homesteaded land three miles north and one-half mile east of the Teepee Creek store (which is still operated today by Donnellys). The farm is now owned by Orville Sorken.

Phil's father and mother moved from Bezanson to Teepee Creek. In 1931 his mother died. His father worked at Fitzpatrick's mill. He died in 1955. Phil married Gladys Charlotte Erno February 3, 1929, whose family moved up from Oregon, U.S.A. in the spring of 1925. I (Gladys) was born April 26, 1912. I am the oldest and have four sisters and three brothers. My father, Mitchell Erno was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1893. My mother Charlotte was born in Minnesota in 1895. They lived in Teepee Creek. My father died in 1950 and my mother is still living in Sexsmith with her daughter Della and son-in-law Henry Fink.

We raised four sons now all living in the Frazer Valley, B.C. In those days, many families practically lived on wild game — moose, deer and even bear. Phil was known as a good provider of game, especially through the hard years, his marksmanship took a back seat to no one. On one occasion while skidding out a moose with his two brothers-in-law, Phil was kicked in the face on the upper jaw bone. The force of the kick



Philip Rochon and Jack Auger taking it easy in the wheat field.

mashed the cheek bone driving his eye far back in its socket. The Erno boys got him on a horse and took him to Jack Fitzpatrick's sawmill, where he was given first aid while the others skidded the moose home, only to break the news as gently as possible to his wife (me). Phil's teeth did not mesh for a few years but he was never tended by a doctor and his face to this day is not marred or scarred from the incident. Phil made a living in Teepee Creek by operating the steam engine at Jack Fitzpatrick's sawmill. He also owned a wood sawing outfit and used to cut wood for many families in the winter.

Phil joined the R.C.A.F. in Edmonton, Alberta, November 12, 1941 and was discharged in 1946. He sold his homestead at Teepee Creek to Mr. Bill Mayne and bought a home on Maitland St. in Burnaby, B.C. He worked for the Alaska Pine sawmill for seven years then for the Burnaby school board for 20 years. He is now retired and we are living on our son's poultry farm in Aldergrove, B.C. At 66 years (1972) Phil took three of his sons hunting near Clinton, B.C. They came home with three moose and two deer. He said it brought back memories of the early years in the Peace River Country.

Our sons were born; Douglas (1930), Hugh (1933), Edward (1936) and Earl (1940).

Douglas married Shirley Pawson and lives in Langley, B.C. They have three children — Sherry Lynn (drowned), Dean and Laurel Lynn (adopted).

Hugh married Joyce Woods and lives in New Westminster, B.C. They have two children — Debbie and April.

Edward married Patricia Wills and they live in White Rock, B.C. They have two children — Cindy and Ace.

Earl married Judy Smith and live in Richmond, B.C. They have two children — Nicole and Troy.

JACK STAFFORD

Jack was a bachelor. He bought the homestead that Herbert Benedick had proved up on and had left the country. It was the N.W. 36-71-3-W. 6. Jack had had a homestead a few miles away from L. J. Nellis' but didn't keep it. Jack was a stock man, loved animals. He helped build the Bezanson Hall in 1923. He hauled logs for it. He liked going to dances and visiting. He left the country in the late 20's.

THE JOHN STARK FAMILY

In a little village of Douglas, Lanarkshire, Scotland, lived John, Sr. and Jane Stark. He was a farmer and to them six children were born — three girls and three boys. They were — Margaret, Isabella, Mary, William, James and John, Jr. As a family, their life was hard but happy. Their meals consisted mostly of porridge for breakfast and supper. When John was only nine months old, tragedy struck with the death of his mother. John, Sr. kept the family together. Once Margaret was old enough, she took care of the house and the children.

The boys took up different trades. James became a policeman and worked around Lanark. John, Jr. went to his sister Margaret's at Castledykes and under the guidance of his brother-in-law, George Wilson, became a very good blacksmith. They made their own tools, sheers and horseshoes although it was hard work. We still have some shoes he made, in our home. This trade was very useful for the rest of his life.

The green valleys of Wales then became attractive to the three boys and they went to jobs of digging ditches on the mountains which was very hard work and very small pay. Then William decided to marry Margaret Ann and settled in the little village of Cry-



Jack Stark family, 1934: Tom, Mary, Johnnie, Jim, Mrs. J. Stark, Douglas, Isobel, Elizabeth, Ann and Jack Stark.

nant, South Wales and invited his father, John Sr., to live with them. Born to Mr. and Mrs. William Stark were six children — Jean, William, John, and Isabel who all live in the Wetaskiwin, Alberta area now. Two other children were little girls who died at a very early age.

In one of James and John's trips to London fair at Trafalgar Square they saw two very pretty young ladies, and on the journey home by train, they again ran into these two same ladies. They found out they were sisters, Mary Elizabeth and Margaret Jones, living at Tyllglas Senny bridge Breconshire, South Wales. So before leaving the train they asked to see them again.

On November 28, 1911, John married Mary Elizabeth Jones at Neath. They had six children — John D. born November 12, 1912, Elizabeth born December 4, 1914, William James born June 26, 1917, Mary born April 4, 1919, Thomas Jenkin born September 30, 1920 and Isabel born January 18, 1924.

Soon after their marriage, John decided to start working in the coal mines and moved into a house on the hill overlooking Crynant and would walk to the mines to work every day coming home about 4 o'clock. The owner of the farm where we rented our house was the Gold and they were a lovely family. Some highlights remembered were the sheering of sheep and making the hay. We would sit on the big stone walls that were used for fences and eat blackberries and whimberries (blueberries here) which we picked.



Jack Stark home by their lake in Bezanson.

School was quite a ways for us to walk. We often would play in the brook as we went or would stop to see our Granny Jones (mother's mother) on the way.

The little church where we went to is still there today and also the same lady who played the organ in 1925. When we were there in 1972, she played for us. It was a little Welsh church as mother spoke Welsh.

Our three families, (as James had married Margaret too), lived very happily there until one day they heard of a far off land across the sea where they could make their fortune. So it was hard to decide whether to leave all our loved ones and take that long trip but in 1925 the brothers applied to see if they could get some land through the Soldier Settlement Board and were accepted to come to Alberta. So now we had to sell all our treasures. John and James got their things straightened away and set off on the first lap of the journey to Pyle where our grandmother had moved to. We spent a very happy month there then alas came the day when we had to say goodbye and take off to Liverpool to catch the ship that would take us to America. Due to circumstances, Will, his family, and John, Sr. could not come with us.

On April 16th we got into a small boat at Liverpool and had to go in it out to where the S S Dorric was launched and climbed aboard. This ship was a big one with all the luxuries of that day on it. At first it was such fun, but one by one we became sea sick and oh for to see land. One day a lady came down the deck and said to the steward, "I wish I could die". Well he looked down the stairs and said, "lady down there is the place to die". I remember helping a young lady take care of her baby when she was so sick. Tom and Don tried to have a tug-of-war one day on deck but the rope was too heavy for such little fellows. The food was wonderful but not many people were up to eat it. A race between our ship and another ship only missed each other by a few feet. Then on April 26, 1926 we sighted shore and sailed into harbor at Montreal which was wonderful. There we got on board a train to travel to our new home in Alberta. We got as far as Winnipeg and were itching something terrible so we all had to have our hair cut and have a bath. Our stay there lasted for three days before they would let us come on. When we landed at Grande Prairie on May 5, 1926, the man at the head of the Soldier Settlement Board with others met us and we were entertained to a wonderful supper. Three days later, Mr. Don Innis, took us out to our homes in the bush which was just a trail. One thing we loved about our home was that it was beside a small lake. Our quarters were S.E. 4 Township 72, Range 3W. of 6 and N.W. 33. Our neighbors were the most wonderful as they cared for each just like a big family.

Our water to drink came from a slough and it didn't taste nice like our brook water in Wales. Later on the men would go to the river and cut ice and haul it home and put it in an ice house. Then every day or so you had to get the ice out, wash it and melt it to drink. In winter, we just hauled snow, and the water for the animals was got from the lake. Our wood supply would be hauled in the winter and cut up in the summer in order to make sure we had enough for the year. The cook stove and a round barrel-like heater would keep us warm but when you got up in the morning the wash dish was full of ice. But mother had made such lovely feather quilts and mattresses and we always kept nice and warm at night. In 1927 another daughter, Ann, was born to John Starks. It was 40 below and Rex Patterson and Wauneita had gone for Mrs. Turner but by the time they arrived, the baby was being bathed by her father and she was so small. Then on July 9, 1930, another boy, Douglas, was born. Mrs. Turner came again to look after mother and the baby. We had a very wonderful father and mother and were a happy family. We had to all work hard, cutting brush, breaking the land and picking roots so our Dads could seed it to grow our crops. We had such happy times threshing when everyone helped. One time I remember we had no meat but mutton so Dad said we were not to say

anything. They all ate it and said it was oh so good but when Dad told them what it was, they were all so sick. Our mothers kept ducks, turkeys, chickens and milked cows and oh what busy days. Douglas decided one day to harness the goslings (12 in all) and pulled them about the yard until none lived. Then he disappeared, and we found him in the turkey coop sleeping and the turkey quietly sitting on her nest full of eggs. One night mom and dad went to milk and the calves had all been saddled and harnessed. We all rode horseback to school unless Dad needed the horses to farm with. One boy almost always had a horse so when we had to walk we would put a rope on his horses tail and he would help pull us along which helped.

John's father came to the Peace River country from Wetaskiwin to live with Jim in 1928. Then he lived with John and his family till he moved into the Pioneer Lodge. His Saturday afternoon activities consisted of polishing shoes and then lined them up on the stairs for Sunday. To the great-grandchildren who remember him, he is always "little grand-dad" with his cane. If this cane was shook at you, you knew he meant business. It was at the Lodge he lived till he passed away in the hospital, September, 1955 at the age of 99 years and six months. He was buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery.

We took some of our schooling at Somme School near the little log church and cemetery at Glen Leslie, then changed to Bezanson. Our teachers were all very interesting and so different. One we learned to love very much was Mrs. Fred Moon who became our close neighbor and was so kind to us. Christmas programs put on by the school teachers were always a highlight even though we just got an orange or something for our stockings. The Rex Patterson home was like a stopping place for all. Cookies and milk were always ready when coming or going to school.

In the early 30's we would walk to the store 4 miles carrying eggs. We would be able to get some sugar or tea and oh what days. Dad would shoot ducks and geese when they came to the Lake. One day some one left the team standing when they were going to shoot at ducks and they ran away and ran one each side of the democrat and broke it up. How sad it was because it was the only way we had to go visiting beside the wagon. We would catch muskrats from the lake and skin them. Then we would sell the skins which helped. Mother would knit our mitts and socks which were really nice. But all of these things added to our experiences.

John D. went to work for the Weavers and would bring home his wages to help get some groceries. Mr. Weaver also would come with his caterpillar tractor to plow the land for us. We would always pick wild strawberries, blueberries and raspberries and mother would can them for winter.

Hunting in the winter often brought our meat in of moose, deer, etc. One time when Johnny had been hunting he was sitting by the fire unloading his gun and somehow he pulled the trigger and what a bang. The lights all went out in the house and barn and Dad just pulled one of the little ones out of the way as the bullet went into the floor.



Oliver, Elizabeth (Stark) Richard and Martha Chandler.

Then Elizabeth went away to Bible School at Sexsmith to take her training for her life-long missionary work she has done. She went to South America and there met and married Oliver Chandler. They spent approximately 20 years on the mission field. While



Jim and Iona Stark wedding — March, 1958.



Jim Stark WW2.

there they had two children, Richard and Martha. Also, Elizabeth had open heart surgery and they have kept on doing mission work in Vancouver where they have lived since coming home to Canada. Richard is a teacher and also does a lot of camping work with children. Martha is a nurse and has married Lloyd Douglas. Now they have a darling little daughter and live in Chilliwack, B.C.

Will Jim was the farmer who helped Dad at home, but when war time came he joined the Edmonton Fusiliers CASF at Grande Prairie on the third day of October, 1940. He served in Canada, the United Kingdom, Central Mediterranean area and continental Europe. He was discharged on December 6, 1945 and he came home to take up once again looking after the farm with Dad, Isabel, Ann and Douglas. He then bought a half section through the V.L.A. and farmed it as well as helping at home. Then Doug and he had a car accident in which he was hurt very badly and in hospital for some time. There he met a nurse, Iona Hoult, who helped him back to health. On March 14th, 1958 he married Iona and they moved to a home a mile away from home for a while before buying a house to move onto their own farm. In about 1963 he moved to Grande Prairie to work at North Canadian Forest Industries and still works there now. They have no children.

In 1958 after William James got married and moved to his own home, the children were all away and married, so John Stark sold the farm to his nephew, Donald, and bought a little house up on the highway just west of Bezanson Store. There he could have his friends come and visit him and his family could come whenever they wanted. Some winters he went into town and lived with Douglas and his family, but would go back out to his little house for the summers. In the summer of 1958, John Stark went back to Wales and Scotland to visit relatives and friends where he spent a very enjoyable three months. Then he spent the rest of his life at Bezanson. He passed away in the Grande Prairie Hospital November 30, 1964, and was buried on December 4th, in the Glen Leslie cemetery.

The Sunday School was held at the homes of E. Peckham, E. Allan, and Hunters. These were an inspiration to me and I loved to be there every Sunday. Then we went to the old log hall to have services and it was there I received Jesus Christ as my Saviour and have tried to live for him with my family since.



Lester and Mary (Stark) Summach and family. Barbara, Linda, Lois, and Warren.

Mary worked in Hythe, Grande Prairie and for Mrs. Turner, the dear nurse. Then I went to Asquith, Saskatchewan to work from September, 1939 to January, 1941, when I got called home to help as mother was sick. So when I arrived home there was no father or mother as they had taken mother to Edmonton to the University Hospital where she passed away on January 21, 1941. The home was so different without a mother and so often you could see her almost carrying the milk pails, etc. That summer I stayed home part of the time then worked for Robert McFees for a month or so. Then came harvest time and rain, day after day, and the threshing dragged on and on. Lester Summach whom I had met at Asquith, Saskatchewan

came up. He thought they were not putting on very big loads so he took John's team out and thought he would show them, but after putting a nice load on he had to throw most of it off again. But after freeze up in December the threshing was all done. And on December 10th, Lester and I were married at the home where we had come to from Wales. Father gave us a lovely wedding among friends and relatives and shivareed us that night. Then we left for our home in Saskatoon and visited Uncle Will and family, also my grandfather on the way at Wetaskiwin. Now after travelling and living at Delisle, Saskatoon, Carlea, Saskatchewan, Three Hills, Alberta, we are back living in Grande Prairie. We often drive out past our old farm to visit friends, our sisters and cousins who live in the district. Mr. and Mrs. Lester Summach had four children — three girls and one boy. Barbara was born June 8, 1944. She took most of her schooling with music as her major and graduated from Omaha Baptist Bible College in Nebraska in May, 1966. She was married to Winston Wurtz of Clairmont on August 15, 1970. They have one little boy and now live in Clairmont. Lois was born February 15, 1946. She took and got her schooling and Certified Nursing Aide and spent ten years doing this. On December 15, 1972 she was married to Ralph Spark from Saskatchewan and they now live in Edmonton. Linda was born June 8, 1947. Upon graduation from high school she became a legal secretary for a law firm. On December 31, 1973 she was married to John Wells from Saskatchewan. They have one little boy and now live in Edmonton. Warren was born May 10, 1951. After graduation from high school he took up electrician work and is doing this now. He still lives at home.



Tom Stark W.W.2.

Tom enlisted in the Army with the CASF of Calgary on the 23rd day of June, 1940. Three years spent in the Army were spent overseas. On June 30th, 1945 he was discharged. After returning from the Army, he went farming and farmed on S.½ of 32-71-3-W. of 6. On March 25th, 1949 he married Ruby Ames, daughter of Fred and Edna Ames. They farmed in the Glen Leslie district and while there two daughters, Darline and Gail, were born to them. They later sold out and followed construction jobs. Another daughter, Faye, was born to them while living in Viking, Alberta. Then they moved to Drayton Valley and lived there three years then on to Red Deer, Alberta where their son Alan was born. They lost him while just a baby. Their next move was back to Bezanson where another daughter, Rose-Marie, was born. In 1960 they moved to St. Albert, Alberta where Tom worked with a construction company. In 1961 another daughter, Lynn, was born. Tom was killed in a construction accident on May 21, 1964 while still living in St. Albert. He was buried on May 25th in the soldier's cemetery in Edmonton. Ruby later married Elden Wurtz of Valleyview and moved to Edmonton with her family where a son, Michael was born to them and then they moved back to Valleyview. Darline, Gail, Faye and Rose-Marie all graduated from Hillside High School in Valleyview. Darline married Bruce Leslie of the Little Smoky and they have two daughters and one son. They reside in Valleyview, Alberta. Gail married David Leslie of the Little Smoky and they have a daughter and a son. They live in Fox Creek, Alberta. Faye married Rick McArthur of Sturgeon Heights and they live in Edmonton, Alberta. Rose-Marie works in Valleyview and Lynn and Michael still go to school there.

Bell married Gordon Heasler on October 29, 1951 at United Church Grande Prairie and lives north of Bezanson Store.

Ann married Elmer Bulford on August 20, 1947 and lives north and west of the Bezanson Store.

DOUGLAS STARK — by daughter — February, 1977

Evan Dougless Stark, better known as Douglas, because he wanted his initials to be D.E.S. after his cousin. He was the youngest of Jack Stark's children. He was born July 9, 1930. He was raised in Bezanson and he will always be remembered for his mischevous actions, a boy with 101 ideas of how to cause trouble. In his later teens he left the area for a few short years while he was in the Occupational Army in Germany. Upon his return he worked in the oil fields.

He then met the girl he was to marry. Doug married Evelyn Ruth Stepaniuk from Webster, Alberta on June 13, 1956. They moved into Grande Prairie to live. A short year later, a little daughter was born on May 31, 1957. The next arrival was two years later, another daughter, Joan Lucy, May 5, 1959. Doug, after six long years of waiting, was to receive his longed for son, Trent Douglas born on April 17, 1962. With two daughters and a son, Doug and Evie were still not satisfied so they had another baby, another daughter, Tracy Ann, who was born on April 10, 1964. Douglas and his wife and family reside in Grande Prairie



Evelyn and Douglas Stark and family: Donna, Joan, Trent and Tracy.

where he presently owns and operates Grande Prairie Muffler Ltd.

JOHNNY STARK AND FAMILY — by Geraldine Stark — February, 1977

John David Stark, my husband, eldest in the family of eight, was born in the small mining town of Crynant, Wales in November of 1912. He came with his family to Grande Prairie in 1926, settling on a farm in the Glen Leslie district. When he was 14, he quit school and worked to help make a living for the family.

Music and horses were on the priority list when it came to enterainment. His boyhood dreams of being a cowboy in Canada, materialized to the extent of being able to participate in local stampedes in the surrounding districts. The thrills and spills of competition were occasionally rewarded by the winning of small prize money.

This was during the Wilf Carter era, so of course you rose early enough in the morning to listen to Wilf Cater sing his western songs on radio. Consequently most musically inclined young fellows found they were singing western songs to themselves for their own pleasure if not perhaps always for others. I wonder now what some young people would think if they could see Johnny packing the old coal oil lantern out to do the chores, singing at the top of his voice. With a bit of perseverence from his family and determination on his part he learned to play the fiddle and guitar. Eventually he played in a small country band and brought home 25c a week to keep the coal oil lamps burning.

I was the baby of the Jensen family, born eight years after the rest of Mom and Dad's family of six. I hope I brought joy and happiness to them, when I arrived July 16, 1918 at Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, for at least the first four months of my life. That fall they shared great grief, when my two eldest brothers, Gustav, 17 years and Sigvald, 19 years died with the flu less than a month apart.

In 1971 I visited the cemetery on the lonely prairies to see their graves. Two small stones mark each grave with a large centre stone between and around each grave are small field stones my mother laid there so carefully many years ago.

Being more or less by myself, I spent most of my time outside, playing with farm animals. When I saw the dust and thistles come rolling over the prairies and the windmill gather up speed, I ran for the house. Those wind storms terrified me if I got caught alone outside. When I was ten we left the prairies to settle in the Grande Prairie area in 1929.

I suppose I had the usual adjustments to make when a shy 10 year old starts in a new school and district. I rode three miles to Somme until I reached grade nine. Then I rode four miles to Lindsay to get my grades nine and ten.

My faithful little pony, Skip, broke snow filled roads many times to get me to school. Some cold days there would only be a few pupils there and we would pull our desks closer to the roaring fire in the old wood stove. Quite often we'd be huddled around the stove in the dim light of morning and someone would yell, "You're scorching" and sure enough you were if you weren't careful. Our little school was full to capacity but we had great times. We always had big concerts with a dance to follow plus lots of homemade lunch and big pots of coffee. In winter when it was too cold to go out we moved the desks over and danced to music played on the player piano or played darts, etc. As soon as possible in spring, we were outside playing basketball, etc. They were the two most enjoyable years I spent in school.

By this time I had a steady boyfriend and was married to Johnny Stark in the fall of 1938 during the depression. We didn't have much money, but lots of love and happiness when we pooled our possessions and moved to our first home on a homestead across Muskeg Creek. Times were hard, but I remember how thrilled I was about our new two room frame house Johnny built of lumber from Moon's mill. To me new houses now will never have that fresh aroma of new lumber used then. Most of our furniture we had was homemade, except of course for the second hand stove given to us, a brand new air tight heater and a couch.

Our happiness was added to when our first son, Duane was born in the spring of '39. Johnny brought us home from the Grande Prairie hospital with a good snappy team on the rubber tired Bennett wagon. The roads were mud and snow, but I remember how I enjoyed that ride home. The spring air was so exhilerating. Geese, ducks and swans were winging their way north. Cattle and horses were restlessly browsing around in the fields.

I remember the wild game was so plentiful at the homestead. Johnny had built a low board fence to keep Duane in when he was small. One evening while he was outside watching the wild rabbits playing, one came and smelt his little hands as he held onto the edge of the fence.

Prairie chicken were also very plentiful, such interesting little birds. In the spring you would see them so prim, head feathers erected, strutting around. Then there would always be the male, usually sitting on a log beating the air with his wings to make drumming sounds to call his mate. Fortunately for us, but unfortunately for them they graced the platter on our table in various ways, quite often during those meager years. Deer often passed through as did bears, coyotes, etc.

We had no car then so in summer we made our visits with Skip, my school pony on the buggy. When Duane was a baby, I put him in a big cardboard banana box, with a pillow in it, clothes pinned some mosquito netting over the top and we were away. The box fit neatly in the front of the buggy and he was snug as a bug in a rug.

When Duane was two we moved to our new farm on the banks of the Smoky, two miles east and two miles south of Bezanson. (N.½ 31-71-2-W. 6.) The small frame house was also moved by horses.

There was lots of work, but I think equally as much fun building up a farm of our own. We had what I suppose you would call a mixed farm, with enough horses to farm, a few cattle, pigs, sheep, chickens and even some tame rabbits once. Johnny worked out every winter in the bush.

In 1944 our second son, Roy, was born. So now when Daddy came home on weekends there were three happy people waiting for him. In 1948 our third son, Warren was born. He wasn't very big but he was spunky and tried to join in all our conversations, big or small. Meanwhile we had to build on to our house to accommodate our growing family.

With a family of three boys, we decided to put in an order for a girl. On August 3, 1956, Denise was born. We were a happy family when we brought her home eight years after our three boys.

There was great excitement when we got electrical power. I remember how we waited for darkness to fall that evening so we could use our bright new electric lights. Outside the lights of our neighbors shone bright, not the dim golden glow we'd been used to seeing. We were now able to get new appliances complete with instructions and warranties.

One morning Johnny, Denise and I went down to the pasture and there a new colt greeted us. Denise was so excited and inquired, — "Mom, did all the papers come with him?"

Meanwhile Johnny had been getting the boys interested in music. Duane usually played the accordion or piano, then finally to the organ. Roy and Warren played guitars. So there was quite a lot of music in the house most evenings. The boys played in various bands, but eventually formed their own band, the Bachelors.

In 1968 we sold the farm and moved to Grande Prairie. We left many happy memories of the farm and close friends. The boys spent many hours wandering down over the banks, hunting, etc. Denise and I often made a little lunch and with Cindy, her little dog went for walks down the banks and enjoyed all of natures' wonderland. We got acquainted with a pair of saucy little Blue Jays in the chokecherry patch. They always made a big fuss when we came.

As each season came there was a nostalgia of different events we had been used to on the farm. In spring we missed watching the little calves frolicking together in the evenings, the mother duck with her brood of waddling little ducks behind her and later on the funny croak of the little roosters when they started to crow. Fall was a busy time with harvest. My happiest memories of fall, I think, are when we still threshed and used horses on the hay racks (not tractors). It was late to bed and early to rise then. It was hard work but was made more enjoyable by the joshing that went on most of the time — who had the best pulling horses, who ran into the feeder, or had the misfortune to lose part of their load.

A fairly hefty lunch had to be sent out, as supper wasn't usually served until 8 o'clock or later. With this crew I had to send a large pot of coffee and a smaller one of tea, so I labelled the one of coffee, "For He-Men Only". Johnny and Beezer drank the tea.

Small city life is different. I miss the awesome quiet of night, pierced occasionally by the howl of the coyotes. Now I am able to enjoy the familiar whistle of the train as it chugs by, the church bells ringing on the hour. I can still enjoy the night sky blazed with northern lights, bright stars shining above city lights and the silhouette of a city horizon at sunset.

We had mixed emotions of happiness and sadness when Denise, our youngest graduated in 1974. It had been 29 years since we put our first little boy astride my school pony, Skip and sent him to the one roomed school house of Bezanson. Another phase in our life had passed when our family now would all be independent.

Duane spent an interesting three years in the Arctic as a radio operator three years ago and is presently home doing custom carpenter work and log building.

Roy is a heavy duty mechanic in Grande Prairie with R. Angus. He and his wife, Marie have a girl, Michelle, 5 years and a boy Troy, 6 months.

Warren is with A.G.T. for acceptance in Edmonton. He and his wife, Terry Lynn have two girls, Becky, two years and Nicole, six months.

Denise married Rick Hryciuk in 1975 and works as a secretary in the Carter-Jewitt law firm.

Presently Johnny's work is mainly with falling and log building, so we're still able to enjoy much of natures outdoors plus the comforts of city life.

JIM G. STARK SR. AND THE DONALD STARK STORY — by Don and Erna — February, 1977

The year 1926 was to be a new adventure for James and Margaret Stark and their three children; two boys — David and Donald and one girl Mary (Polly).

They left South Wales for Canada and arrived in Grande Prairie, Alberta, May 5, 1926 where we stayed three days, before coming to our new home in Bezanson on the N.E. 4-72-3-W. 6. This land came under the Soldier Settlement scheme. Upon our arrival in Grande Prairie we were met by Don Innes who was the supervisor of the Soldier Settlement board. He advised us and helped in the buying of livestock and machinery.



Jim Stark Sr. family — 1925. Jim, Margaret, David, Donald and Polly on father's knee.



Donald Stark family, Nov. 1975. David, Lois, Gloria, Kenny, Jeannie, Erna, Donald and Margaret.

Our home consisted of a new house and two log buildings and about seven acres of broken land. Much of the clearing was done with an axe and broke with horses and a wooden beam breaking plow. Besides clearing land Dad worked at many different jobs for other farmers to make a living.

Both parents took an interest in Church and community affairs. On October 16, 1930 Desmond was born, making a family of six. A year later, David the oldest, got sick with T.B., after spending many months in hospitals, died at the Sanatorium in Calgary on February 27, 1932. It seemed fate was not stopping yet. It seemed Mom never got over losing her son and in a few years the same thing claimed her. After spending a year in the Sanatorium in Calgary, she came home looking very well, but not for long, soon she was sick again. After spending months in bed at home, she passed away quietly on July 13, 1935, leaving Dad and three children, along with the depression.



Grandpa John Stark, Don, Polly and Desmond.

It was sometime after that our grandfather came up from Wetaskiwin to stay and help in the house. Grandad stayed with us for a number of years. We had one thing to be thankful for and that was the best Dad any boy or girl could ever ask for. Many long hours he spent cooking, sewing or darning for us, along with outside work to do. The next 16 years were pretty good to us. We did not have much money but we had good health, which was all we needed to build a home.

Then romance came by, on October 24, 1951, Des and Polly were married at a double wedding; Des



Jim Stark Sr. with 2 beautiful coyote pelts.

married Lorice Weegar and Polly married Meryle Patterson.

Dad and I batched for the next two years, in that time Dad did not have very good health. On November 18, 1953 he passed away nine days after his 70th birthday. The rest of the winter after Dad died I spent alone. Except for being lonely, it was just a normal time feeding livestock, hauling wood and ice from the river for drinking water, coming home and finding the tea kettle froze on the stove and nine times out of ten, the woodbox empty. But once again spring did come with the sun warm and bright.



Donald and Desmond Stark hilling potatoes.

In that same spring of 1954 I met Erna Bankhead. We were married in the fall on December 17th, at Wanham.

We lived on the old farm where two of our children were born. In the spring of 1958 we bought our uncle's home quarter S.E. 4-72-3-W. 6, where we still are living. Four more children came into our family. The four oldest at present are working in Grande Prairie; Lois, David, Gloria and Ken. Margaret and Jean are home and going to school at Bezanson.

GEORGE STEWART SR. STORY — by Dorothy and Bud Stewart — January, 1977

George Alexander Stewart and his wife Sophia, daughters May and Florence and sons, Earl and Roy came over the Edson Trail in the fall of 1912. George worked for the Argenaut Company's sawmill by the



Donald Stark and his team all ready to go to work.



Grandpa George Stewart threshing at Mart Gearys.

Wapiti River. On May 12, 1913 he filed on the S.W. 36-71-3-W. 6 in the Bezanson district, built a cabin and the family moved in. Later on, his steam threshing outfit was a welcome sight at harvest time, throughout the territory east of Grande Prairie to the Big Smoky River.

Mr. and Mrs. G. Stewart and two sons, left the country in 1923 to make their home in Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A.

Earl and Roy Stewart came back to Grande Prairie for a few days visit in July, 1972, the first time in 49 years.



Earl, Florence, Roy, Charlie and Mrs. George Stewart.

May married Harley Wheeler, who farmed about eight miles east and four miles north of Grande Prairie. The Club Hall was on their land. They later moved to Grande Prairie and in 1935 to Victoria, B.C. They had six children; four boys — Harley Jr., Ray, Gaye, and Bert and two girls — Laverne and June. Harley passed away several years ago, but Mrs. Mae Wheeler is still living in Victoria, B.C.

Earl passed away in December, 1976.

Florence married Bill Kennedy and they lived in McLennan, Alberta. She passed away in 1955.

Charles married Lottie Thomas and lived in Bezanson, Alberta.

CHARLES BEVAN STEWART AND PHYLLIS (MATTOON) STEWART — by Phyllis — January, 1977

Phyllis Evelyn Mattoon, daughter of Fred L. and Mabel Mattoon of Ferintosh, Alberta, came to the Bezanson district in May, 1946 to teach at the Bezanson school which was then under the supervision of Jean McLaughlin. Phyllis was met at the Bezanson store by Johnny Stark and his one horse buggy. John, who was then a school board member took her to the Bill Moon home where she was to board.

From May, 1946 to June 30, 1947, Miss Mattoon taught the Bezanson school, boarding at different times at Bill Moon's, Jack Mitchell's and at Bud Stewart's. One of the most memorable Christmas concerts was held in the Bezanson school, December, 1946, when the children were involved in plays, recitations, pantomimes and choir singing. Such a large crowd attended that many stood at open windows to see and hear. Many students rode horses to the Bezanson school as did the teacher. One morning —52 degrees Fahrenheit, the teacher arrived at the school to find no fire, which was to be expected when the janitor was a 12 year old boy, whose only means of getting to school that day would have been to walk. Returning home after finding the school cold, Miss Mattoon was aroused while still on horseback by Donald Mitchell, when he realized the slow moving horse, coming across Pete Moon's big field was not being encouraged by a very alert rider. That day is still the record low for this district in January.



Clara, Charlie and Lottie Stewart, Nat Hunter.

In July, 1947, Miss Phyllis Mattoon married Charles Bevan Stewart and they resided on the Charles H. Stewart farm until 1949 when they built a residence on the S.E. 35-71-3-W. 6. Eventually they purchased this land and the S.W. 36-71-3-W. 6, and the home quarter section that had been Bill Moon's.

Charles Bevan and Phyllis had four children; Cherry Lynn was born in 1950, graduated as a hair dresser after completing grade 12 at Grande Prairie Composite, later married Philip Joseph Dionne. They have a daughter born in 1972, Bobby Jo Dionne. Marvin Lee was born in 1953, trained as a welder and married Jean Hennigar from the Sexsmith-Badheart districts. They made their first home on the quarter of land the Stewarts purchased from Bill Moon. Shannon Kelly born in 1955 also completed school at the Grande Prairie Composite and trained as an electrician after which he spent some time employed in Hay River.



Bill and Florence Kennedy and daughter, Helen. Charlie Stewart family.

Creston Zane attended high school in Grande Prairie and almost completed grade 12 but was lured by heavy duty equipment into the field of brushing and clearing and building roads.

Phyllis Stewart spent several years in the teaching profession in service at the new Bezanson school and for the East Smoky School Division at Debolt and Crooked Creek. She completed her studies and received her B.Ed. degree in 1977.

Charles Bevan spent several years as Feed Mill Operator at the Grande Prairie Feed Service where he became a good authority on animal feeds and nutrition and a helpful neighbour when anyone needed feeds or medicine brought out from town. He also completed a welding course at Saskatoon and did much welding.

Together the Stewart family raised an extremely presentable flock of Montodale Sheep which for a time was the only flock of this breed in Alberta. They travelled with their sheep to many fairs and exhibitions, taking turns at home doing chores while alternate members of the family enjoyed the semi-holiday the various fairs supplied.

For a time Phyllis Stewart's mother, Mabel Mattoon lived at the Stewart farm and became well known by most neighbours. She eventually moved to Pioneer Lodge in Grande Prairie, later to the Auxiliary Hospital where she passed away in March, 1973. Mrs. Mattoon was the first woman editor of a newspaper in Alberta (possibly in Canada) since she published the Consort Enterprise in 1913. She had come to Alberta with her brothers on a homesteading adventure having previously taught school in North Dakota, U.S.A. Her coming to the Peace River area to live near her two daughters followed a nervous breakdown after she had spent six years as cook at the Alberta Bible College in Camrose, Alberta.

CHARLES H. STEWART SR. — by Dorothy and Bud Stewart — January, 1977

Charles Henry was the eldest son of George and Sophia Stewart, born September 25, 1892 in Sombre, Ontario. He came to Edmonton, Alberta with his parents in 1912 from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and took a homestead in Edgerton, Alberta and his Dad took one at Wainwright, Alberta, but none of them stayed long, they all went back to Sault Ste. Marie in the fall.

Charles met his wife Charlotte (Lottie) Thomas, and they were married there, March 1, 1913. They came over the Edson Trail that fall, took three weeks by sleigh and arrived November second. His Father had filed on a homestead for him by proxy, and they came out to claim it.

They had four children; Clara (March, 1914), George Clayton (Bud), (December, 1918), Doris (April, 1920) and Charles Bevan Jr. (December, 1925). The children went to the Bezanson School. Charles H. did the janitor work for the school (after it was moved close to them December 27, 1925) and when it was cold, he would help the children with their horses (as most of them rode horseback) as their hands were usually too cold to tie them up. Several teachers boarded at their place. Mae and Rene Traynor batched in Charlie's old homestead house, when Mae taught school at Bezanson. Charlie and family were living on his Dad's place then.

They farmed with horses until tractors arrived. Their homes were heated with wood, coal in later years. Coal oil and gas lamps (later) were used for lights.

They travelled with horses and buggies, wagons or sleighs, many rode horseback.

There were dances, box socials, pie socials, etc., in the old log hall which burned down. Benefit dances were put on after fire disasters, etc. The old log hall was well known for wedding dances and the Bezanson picnic was a yearly occasion, later there was the Bezanson Stampede for a number of years.

Clara married Dick Richardson and had two sons and one daughter; Tom, Bill and Erna. Dick passed away in fall of 1945.

Tom married and living in Kamloops, B.C., has a son and two daughters. Bill married and living in Aberdeen, Scotland has two daughters. Erna married and living in Victoria, B.C., has three daughters. Clara later married Lairer Jensen (a widower with one son, Joe.) They had two daughters and one son; Margaret, Frances and Jim.

Margaret married and living in Dawson Creek, B.C., has four daughters.

Frances (Bunny) married and living in Winfield, B.C., has two sons and two daughters.

Jim married and living in Edmonton, Alberta has a son and daughter.

Doris married Martin Giesbrecht and lived in the Debolt area till he passed away in September, 1970. They had four children; Garry, Wayne, Ann, and Norma.

Garry married and living in Fairview, Alberta has three sons and a daughter.

Wayne married Elsie Doerkson and live in Grande Prairie, Alberta. They have two daughters.

Ann married Walter Luka and live at Hines Creek, Alberta. They have a son and a daughter.

Norma lives in Dawson Creek, B.C., where she and her mother, Doris, reside.



Dorothy Stewart (holding baby Gwen of 1 month), George (Bud), holding Eric, 3½ years.

GEORGE CLAYTON (BUD) STEWART STORY — by Dorothy — January, 1977

Bud was born December, 1918 son of Charlie and Lottie Stewart at Bezanson. He went to school at Bezanson. In August, 1941 he joined the Army and went overseas, along with many other Bezanson boys. He was discharged January, 1946.

He bought the W.½ 2-72-3-W. 6, from Marvin Jensen. In earlier years these two quarters had been homesteaded by Charlie Moon and Sam Hunter.

I (Dorothy Braund) was the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Braund, and was born at Carroll, Manitoba (about 20 miles from Brandon.) My parents came from England. Mother came from London and Dad a few miles away at Watford. I had three sisters and one brother. (Margaret, Alice, Ann and Wilf.)

I married "Bud" Stewart of Bezanson, Alberta November 19, 1946. My sister Alice came to Bezanson to be my bridesmaid. She stayed and taught at the Montrose school 1½ years in Grande Prairie. My brother Wilf came up to Grande Prarie in the spring of 1946 and worked as a delivery milk man for Sid Watson, later on at Hanson's Hardware, then the Co-op Store until July, 1950. He drowned in the Wapiti River along with Cecil (Cowboy) Blimke of the Five Mile district. Wilf was married to Jean McKenzie, who now resides in Edmonton.

Bud and I have two children; Eric (January, 1950) and Gwen (June, 1953.)

We lived on the farm for several years and then went back to Brandon, Manitoba for a time. In 1965 we moved to Grande Prairie. Bud has worked at North Canadian Forest Industries (plywood mill) since May, 1962. I worked in the Brandon Hospital while living in Brandon and then for seven years in the Grande Prairie Hospital after coming back here.

Eric, our son is in his 6th year of teaching French and German. He is presently teaching his third year in Kamloops, B.C. The past four years at Easter holiday time, he has taken students to Paris and Munich.

Gwen, our daughter lives in Grande Prairie. The past five years she has worked in Banks in Edmonton and Grande Prairie and is presently working for General Motors Acceptance Corporation.



Eric and Gwen Stewart (4½ years and 16 months) 1954.

JOE THOMPSON

Joe homesteaded the S.W. 1-72-3-W. 6 in 1915. He also started running a livery barn at the Bezanson Townsite. Fred Richard Waldron also homesteaded just north of Joe's on the N.W. 1-72-3-W. 6. Fred was a bachelor. He built a house on Joe's farm for Joe and his wife. They left later and went to Grande Prairie where they ran the Murray Hotel, later returning to the U.S.A.

FRED THOMPSON

Fred came to the Bezanson area in 1913 and homesteaded the N.W. 6-72-2-W. 6. He also got a half section scrip near the Bezanson Townsite. He proved up his land by having cattle. Later he sold it to the Soldier Settlement Board and went back to Hermit Lake where he became a prominent farmer. Bill Taylor then bought the N.W. 6-72-3-W. 6. He and his wife were from England. They didn't stay too long.

MR. HENRY TRIPP

Henry homesteaded in 1914 the N.E. 25-71-2-W. 6. In 1919, when the Bezanson school was built (on the quarter section just south of Henry's along his south line,) Henry was one of the first school trustees and was so for many years. In later years, he bought a new "Star" car, one of the first of its kind, up here. He didn't know that cars weren't the same as horses. One day, starting it up, the clutch was jerking and he was headed towards the wood pile at Oliver Menard's. He jumped it right over the pile and then turned it around and jumped it again.

When threshing time came around in the fall he would get Mrs. Lottie Stewart (Charlie's wife) to come and cook for him. Once his nephew came and stayed with him for awhile, but Henry remained a bachelor and lived alone most of the time. In later years Ira McLaughlin farmed his land. Peter McNalley bought his quarter later on and lived there



Henry Tripp.

for a number of years before retiring to Grande Prairie, Alberta.

ELLIS TURNER STORY AT THE BEZANSON TOWNSITE — by Ellis Turner — January, 1977

Bezanson as I remember it, was already starting to be a ghost town. In "the year of the big snow" or 1920 there were four families living in the townsite. There was Mrs. Bryenton, her daughter and her two sons, Arthur and Ted. Mrs. Bryenton operated the Morrison store.

There was a family, the Fredricksons, Mr. and Mrs., two sons and a daughter. There was my family — the Turners, including father and mother, two brothers, Albert and Clifford and myself (Ellis.) My brother, Charlie, and his wife, Jean, and their son Charlie Jr. and daughter Jean, moved almost immediately to Grande Prairie. My sister Ethel who had been teaching at MacLeod, Alberta, came in July of 1920, and the following term taught at the Glen Leslie school which was being held in the little log Presbyterian Church.

Almost all the travel on the trail from east of the Smoky River came through Bezanson, though some winter travel crossed on the ice at Moody's by the way of Goodwin, Alberta. The ferry was at the townsite crossing and the east Smoky settlers got their mail and groceries there. Too, this was the road to Grande Prairie then.

There had been a lot of construction in the townsite, that was gone when I arrived there. For instance there was a flour mill, quite a large two story structure, with shavings still on the floor. It had never turned a wheel. There had been three stores. Morrison's was still in operation, one was the district dance hall now, and one had been in the front room of the Fredrickson house. There were two livery barns, one had been run by Billie Bayhen, (in a town that size today, there would be two garages instead of livery barns). There



Turner's cattle formerly Percy Bezanson's at the old Townsite.

were six houses left. One of the livery barns was still in operation, the other had become a cow barn. There was one blacksmith shop hardly used. There had been a harness shop, and what was now the Morrison store was originally built as a hotel. There was too, quite a nice Church, which served as a school for the surrounding district. The school included the MacArthur kids, later of Sturgeon Lake, and Debolt, Ivon Morrison and the Carl Peterson family, later of Sturgeon Lake and Debolt.

Originally, travellers from over the Trail came down into the Simmonette Valley from the east to what the old timers know as "Hicky Flats", from there, they went if it was winter, down the Simmonette to the Smoky, then down the Smoky to Bezanson flats, about a mile below the mouth of the Simmonette, up through Brookbanks flats, (where the blueberries are) and the old trails are straight west to Grande Prairie, or Prairie City as it had been called.

The failure of the railroad to continue on to the Grande Prairie area, from Whitecourt pretty well killed Bezanson, as a town. The moving of the ferry to Goodwin finished it.

In 1922, the Morrison Store was torn down and moved to Glen Leslie, where it was rebuilt as a store there. The church became Pat Rooney's store in what is now called Bezanson. Other buildings were hauled away, or burned by brush fires and today, all that is left at Bezanson's dream of a city is the flat that it was built on, with 8" and 10" trees where the hotel and other buildings once stood.

I was the last resident of Bezanson, and I left it in August, 1923. I returned that winter, just before Christmas, and there was one plymouth rock chicken still scratching around in the livery barn, that I'd missed, and a flock of pigeons that had flown back there from Debolt. All that is left now, is the scenery (the only scenic area in the south Peace) and a few cellar holes. On my last trip there, I wondered, how many hopes and dreams ended there on that lonely, but attractive spot.

My parents' family (the Sam Turners) moved to Debolt, Alberta. I, (Ellis) married Barbara Matlock and have a family of three girls and one boy. Joan, Linda, Valerie and Bill.

Joan married Wayne Bowman and live in Grande Prairie.

Linda married and is now Linda McDonald, live in Whitehorse, Northwest Territories.

Valerie married Mike Peterson of Debolt and are now living at White Horse, Northwest Teritories.

Bill, our only son lives at home. We live on a farm near the Debolt Village.

MR. FRANK WARREN

Frank came from the U.S.A. He was called 'Dad Warren' by everyone. He had a son John who came to see him after World War I. Dad homesteaded a flat called Warren's flat (N.W. 21-71-2-W. 6) southeast of the Bezanson townsite, where the Simmonette River joins the Smoky. For a time he lived in Boogie Sprague's house and worked for Arnold Christie. When Guy Patterson was living on Arnold's place (1½ miles west of Grandma Moon's), Dad worked for him too. Warren's flat was always good deer hunting.

Schools

BEZANSON SCHOOL HISTORY — February, 1977

In 1915, school was being organized for the children of the district. School was held in the Bezanson



High school at Bezanson Hall — 1930-31. Roy Hughson, Gordon Moon, Neil McLaughlin, Arnold Ferris, Edna Olson, Irene Johnston, teacher — Miss Dorothy Goodland, Wauneita Patterson, Mildred Allen, Mildred Patterson, Evelyn Witherly, Marian Ferris, Bernice Ames.

Presbyterian log church, at the top of the Smoky River hill, above the townsite, starting in 1916. Miss Ida Colby, daughter of a homesteader, Mr. Frank Colby, was the first teacher. Some of the pupils that went to school there were; Ernie Porier, Lorne McArthur, Hazel Lupton, Ivan Morrison, Fred Moon, Philip Rochon, Gladys, Arthur and Ted Bryenton, Florence and Roy Stewart.

In 1919, a lumber school was built, No. 3302, on the southeast corner of N.E. 25-71-3-W. 6. It was named after A. M. Bezanson. The first teacher was Mrs. Todd.

Another teacher was Mae Bolonger and Mrs. Ida (Colby) Dewhirst taught after she was married in 1924-25 and the following term 1925 until Christmas



Bezanson School at the church at the top of the hill above the Townsite.

when the school was moved to the northwest corner of N.W. 25-71-3-W6.

Mrs. Mae Traynor taught the last half of the term January to June 30, 1926.

In 1926-27, Mae Traynor taught again.

In 1927-28 teacher was Mae Traynor.

In 1928-29, Miss Martha Gudlaugson of Clairmont, Alberta was the teacher.

In 1929-30, Miss Dorothy Goodland was the teacher.



Bezanson School 1928-29. Front Row: Bud Stewart, Doris Stewart, Dorothy Johnston, Don Stark, Willis Johnston, Tommy Stark, Milfred Patterson, Jack Moon. 2nd row: Elsie Olson, Eileen Hunter, Violet Olson, Albert Johnston, Billie Moon, Mary Stark, Edna Olson, Marion Ferris, Earl McLaughlin. 3rd row: Arnold Ferris, Clara Stewart, Elizabeth Stark, Irene Johnston, Mildred Allen, Polly Stark, Vernon Patterson, Edith Henry, Wauneita Patterson, Elmer McLaughlin.

In 1930-31, Miss Dorothy Goodland taught for one month and then she went to teach high school at the Bezanson Hall and Betty Willetts taught the remainder of the term.

The 1931-32 teacher was Miss Betty Willets.

Teachers from 1932-37 were Lillian Hicks, Nancy French, Lucy Bonella, Mrs Gertie Clarkson and Hilda Muttart.

In 1937-38, Miss Alma Ulmer was the teacher.

In 1938-39, Miss A Ulmer taught until Christmas and B. Joslin taught the last half.



Bezanson School 1927-28. Transportation to school.



In 1939-40, Miss Beatrice Moir was the teacher.

In 1940-41, Miss Martha Knechtel was the teacher.

In 1941-42, K. F. Philip was the teacher.

In 1942-43, Miss Laura Berg was the teacher.

In 1943-44, Mrs. Grace Ferris taught from October until the end of December and Miss Ruth Gibson taught from January until the end of term.

In 1944-45, there were four teachers; first, Miss Lucy Jones, then Miss Margaret McNaught, next Miss Marion Muzyka and last Miss Marion Burgess.



Bezanson School 1919-20. Front row: Marie Colby, Ed Lanctot, Hugh Moon, Ivor and Imogene Colby, George and Violet Peschell. 2nd row: George Colby, Ruth Lanctot, Ted Bryenton, Ron Moodie, Dorothy Lanctot, Ruth Lanctot. 3rd row: Grace Allen, Dretta Cannon, Roy Stewart, Ernie Poirier, Cecil Allen, Mrs. Todd, Reg Moodie, Philip Rochon.

In 1945-46, Miss Jean McLaughlin supervised correspondence until April, when a teacher came from normal school — Miss Phyllis Mattoon.

In 1946-47, Miss Phyllis Mattoon taught again.

In 1947-48, Miss Mary Tomshak was the teacher.

In 1948-49, Mr. Allen Thronson was the teacher.

In 1949-50, Miss Vera Spence was the teacher and then Mrs. Marie Ames.

In 1950-51 Miss Lorina McLaughlin supervised correspondence.

These are the children that were going that year (1949-50): Margaret Miller; Deryle Moon; Gary Parrish in grade 1; Jimmy McLaughlin and Joyce Mitchell in grade two. Kay Allen, Charlie and Marcel Parrish in grade three. Sylvia Parrish in grade four. Duane Stark in grade five. Barney McNally and Janet Parrish in grade six. Dale Parrish in seven and Lillian Berg in eight.

In 1950-51 Miss Lorina McLaughlin supervised correspondence. The pupils were Helen Parrish in grade one; Joyce Mitchell, David Taylor, Margaret Miller, Deryle Moon in grade two; Kay Allen in four; Sylvia Parrish in five; Janet Parrish and Barney McNally in seven; Dale Parrish in eight.

These last three years there was school being



Bezanson School 1946-47. Front row: Charlie and Marcel Parrish, Bobby Ogden, Sylvia and Melvin Parrish. 2nd row: Dale Parrish, Shirley Ogden, Janet Parrish, Barney McNally, Laura Menard, Duane Stark. 3rd row: Claire Menard, Gordon and Alice Olson, Georgia and Sheila Parrish, Tom McNally. 4th row: Dorothy Mitchell, Joe Lowe, Dick Haworth, Albert Menard, Herbert Earl Lowe, Helen McLaughlin.

taught at the Bezanson Village, so some of the children had been transferred there. At the end of June, 1951, this school was closed. Ross Ford bought the building and moved it to have a house made of it in the Bezanson village and a few years later it burned down.

During the years that this school was used some of the inspectors were Wesley Oakes, C. B. Johnston, L. A. Walker and Stan Hambly.



Bezanson School — 1938. Front Row: Pam Hunter, Lawerence Moon, Jean McLaughlin, Ann Stark, Joyce Moon, Helen McLaughlin. 2nd row: Robert Hunter, Florence, Wilfred Menard, Isobel Stark, Armana Menard, Charles Stewart. 3rd row: Polly Stark, Mary Hunter, Mary Moon, Willis Johnston, June Ferris, Doris Stewart, Elise Menard.

A number of people who were trustees were; Henry Tripp, Ira McLaughlin, Wes Ferris, Ed Allen, Sam Hunter, Charlie Johnston and Jack Lowe. Secretary-treasurers were; Charlie Stewart, Grant Lowe and John D. Stark.

COMMUNITY BUILDS OWN TEACHERAGE TO KEEP TEACHER — July, 1955

Perspiring under a blazing sun, farmers of the Bezanson district are working on their own time to finish the teacherage for the local school in time for the fall term.

If the present plans materialize, the building should be complete in about three weeks. Already the forms for the basement and the sub-floor are complete. Pouring of the cement was to be completed by Friday night.

Because a new teacherage could not be fitted into the building program for the county this year, local farmers volunteered their time, free of cost, if the county would supply them with the needed materials. An agreement was reached and local men were organized into shifts by Bowden Hawryluk and Charlie Moon, district farmers. About eight men are usually at work at a time. Several extra workers were on hand for the heavy work of pouring the cement. Andy Waldner, county carpenter is in charge of the building.

The 24 by 26 foot structure will boast central heating, a full basement, a bathroom, a living room and a kitchen.

Center of all this activity is a popular young teaching couple, Roy Gouchey and his wife Fern. Besides doing an outstanding job in the classroom, Mr. Gouchey is a popular figure in the community there. He is a player on the local senior ball club. He has spark plugged the organization of teenage hockey games in the district. Largely because of his promotion, the School Christmas Concert was a big success.

When it became evident the couple must move to another school unless they could find better housing, residents decided it was time to take matters into their own hands.

Proud of his school, Mr. Gouchey is looking forward to the day when he will ring the bell to call the children into the proposed four or five roomed school which will be built near the present structure. Date for construction of this building is not definitely set as yet but is expeted to start within the next year or two.

P.S.: Roy and Fern Gouchey were transferred from Bezanson after one more school term and the four roomed school became a reality in the fall of 1957.

CEREMONIES MARK THE OPENING OF THE BEZANSON CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL — 1957

Charles Moon, 1913 pioneer of Bezanson, was chosen chairman and to cut the ribbon, Tuesday afternoon when the Bezanson four room school was formally opened.

Centralization of the district was reviewed by Mr. Johnson. Bezanson was no easy problem. The County school committee was divided in its opinion as to centralization — but ratepayers request was made — and so the County acceeded to their wishes.

County Councillor J. L. Warren of Sexsmith, made the presentation of the 'Key' to Principal Henry Schellenberg, who accepted the symbol with appreciation. "May it be a token of success in the work of our staff", he said. At that point, he introduced teachers, Bruce Prytluk, Miss Shirley Swanson, and Mrs. Gertrude Matvie.

"Credit of this school goes to the parents and citizens of Bezanson — only because you have given your support to the County and school committee as a whole!" Mr. Andruski commented.

At another point he noted, "You have some very fine features in this school not characteristic of schools a generation ago; science laboratory, running water, lighting . . . A good building alone is not sufficient; it is not going to provide a good education itself. We must have dedicated teachers and co-operation of parents."

P.S.: In 1960, two more rooms and an auditorium were added.

CERTIFICATE HONORING

Certificate honoring part in rescue of Jamie Ford, five years, from a Bezanson dugout in November, 1968 was presented to Mrs. Phyllis Thomspon by Mayor Elmer Borstad last night. Mrs. Thompson was one of four persons honored by Royal Canadian Humane Association. Others included Bill Maxwell, Larry Fells and John Hinks.

Churches

FAITH OF THE PIONEERS — PROTESTANT CHURCH HISTORY — written up January, 1977

As far as can be determined it seems apparent that the Church went to the Pioneers who received its

ministry gladly. If we would be true to their beginnings, then we of the Church are challenged in our day to reach out into the community in order that all may come to know the Love of God in Jesus Christ.

The first minister in the area was Dr. Alexander Forbes, a Scottish Presbyterian from Aberdeen. He had begun his Canadian ministry at Ft. Saskatchewan, Alberta in 1894 and the following year he was married to Agnes Sorrel by Rev. D. G. McQueen in the first Presbyterian Church in Edmonton, Alberta. In 1909, the Edmonton Presbytery asked Mr. Forbes to make a trip to the Peace River area and report whether or not a mission ought to be established. The 1300 mile trip over, Mr. Forbes reported that a mission ought to be established with Bear Creek as headquarters. In 1910, Rev. and Mrs. Forbes were appointed to be the Missionaries.

On October 8, 1911, the Dedication Service for McQueen Presbyterian Church was held in Grande Prairie and this building still stands next to the more modern St. Paul's United Church.

Soon after their first church was established, Mr. Forbes began securing other 10 acre plots of land wherever there were settlers. His hope was to build churches and in this way bring the means of Grace to the people.

In August of 1914, Rev. Forbes started holding services in three homes; James Brookbanks, William McGowans, and George Stewarts. These services were held on Friday evenings. On Saturday Rev. Forbes would travel to Glen Leslie, where he spent the night at the Thomas Leslie home, and would hold services there Sunday morning, then on to Grande Prairie in time for the evening service.

On November 21, 1914, a meeting was held to consider building a church at Glen Leslie. It was decided to build a church out of logs, to be cut during the winter months. A subscription list was drawn up with cash donations and labor promised by all present. The first building committee consisted of Thomas Leslie, Dan Minchin, Alex Milne, Lou Fowler, Bruce Leslie. Alfred Olson was to be the carpenter.



Bezanson Church.

On Friday, December 11, 1914 at Bezanson, at the home of Mr. Cecil Evans, Rev. Forbes broached the subject of a church for the Bezanson area. Here also, a subscription list was drawn up, and the Bezanson residents, also decided to build the church of logs from the Harwood farm and decided on a location, just at the top of the hill, near the townsite of Bezanson (17-71-2-W. 6). Among those present were; Mr. Harwood, Bill Hall, P. M. Bezanson, S. Wes Bentley, George Casson, Wm. Bayhan, Wm. Slobre, Fred Parker, D. McDonald, Joe Newman, J. Kuntz. Both church buildings were to be size 20' x 30'.

By March of 1915, the logs were out and building began as soon as the crops were in. Each district hired one carpenter at $4.00 a day. Mr. Olson in Glen Leslie and Mr. Kuntz in Bezanson and with volunteer labor the churches were finished in the fall of 1915.

The cash cost of the church was less than $500.00 and to finish paying for the churches a booth was operated at the Grande Prairie Sports, July 1, 3, 4, and 5 in 1916.

Both churches served the community as school houses for many years. The church at Glen Leslie still stands next to the Glen Leslie cemetery while the Bezanson church has a longer history. When the townsite failed to materialize and most of the people moved out of the valley in 1920, the church was moved to the Bezanson site where the village is now, and used as a store, owned by Pat Rooney. Rupert Weegar bought this old store, using the piece that was added to build his house and the former log church building has been moved to where Harvey Weegar lives (on Earl Weegar's quarter, S.W. 34-71-3-W. 6) and a shop has been made of it.

During the early days in the district, a Baptist minister, Rev. Bagely held services in some of the homes, one home was Grandma Moons.

Rev. Alexander Forbes, the missionary minister of Forbes Presbyterian church stayed in the Grande Prairie area holding services until 1925, when church union of the Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationals took place. Now it was called the United Church of Canada. However the Presbyterians pulled out and in 1930 started their own church again.

In 1928 and '29, Rev. Maurice Armstrong (United Church minister) living at, and serving Clairmont and the rural districts, held services in the Bezanson Hall in the summer months. Then in 1930, and until 1932, Rev. James McNeil came to Clairmont, Alberta and he also served the rural districts, alternating Sundays with Rev. Waterman — the Baptist minister from Grande Prairie at the Bezanson Hall.

In 1934, Rev. Stanley Hunt and his family came to Clairmont United Church from Beaverlodge, Alberta, where they had been for four years. He held services in the homes at Crystal Creek, usually at Clarence Raisons and at Ross Wales in Glen Leslie and Rex Pattersons in Bezanson and also travelling as far as Debolt, Alberta. They were here for three years.

During the 40's and 50's services were held again in the Glen Leslie Church in the summers. In 1943 and '44,

Rev. J. R. Carson (Presbyterian) was the minister. A number of children were baptized while he was there.

In 1946 and '47, Rev. Roskum (Baptist minister) held services every other Sunday in the Church.

Rev. R. A. Davidson (Presbyterian) held services and also Sunday School during 1951, '52, '53 from Easter through to about Christmas. In June, 1953, Miss Rae, a deaconess carried on with services until Rev. McKee came in the fall. Mrs. Roy Ames was organist for many years.

Some of the Anglican ministers that held services in the district were; Rev. J. B. Owens, Rev. Standish and Rev. Robertson. They would hold services in the Bezanson school (in the village) and I well remember the lovely Sunday School Concerts in the school.

From October, 1955 Rev. Bev Johnson (United Church minister from Grande Prairie) held services in the Bezanson Hall and school and also in the Legion Hut. He held many services from 1955 to 1958 when he left Grande Prairie. He allowed the Bezanson church people to keep the collections from the services, all except for Christmas and Easter services. These were given to the Missionary Society. His time and services were all donated so that a United Church could get started. In 1956, a picnic was held at the Simmonette River. On March 4, 1958, the first board meeting on record was had. Earlier ones were destroyed in Vernon Ford's house fire. A church board was elected — some were; Bill Moon, Harold Ford, Rupert Weegar, George Knight and Russell Ames.

The Bezanson church people acquired the Lindsay high school, which was being used at the Bezanson village as a public school until a larger school, the Bezanson Consolidated was built. They moved it to the Bezanson sports ground near the Legion Hut. However Mr. Jerome Norton leased them a few acres of land on his quarter section. (S.W. 14-72-3-W. 6), on the Southwest corner by highway 34, so that the church could have a home of its own. The people all rallied round and had a full sized basement dug and cemented and helped to put the newly acquired building on the foundation. In December, 1958 the building was moved but wasn't in operation until October, 1959.

Mr. Wm. Mayberry, a student minister from Debolt United Church held five services at Bezanson during the months of July and August, 1958. Rev. Don Frame then came and had occasional services until July, 1959. He was from the United Church of Grande Prairie.

A Ladies Aid to help the church was formed March 23, 1958 with a large number of ladies attending. Many teas, bazaars and home bake sales were held to make money to pay for expenses of moving and getting the Church ready for use and to keep it going. Some of the expenses were: moving the Church — $325.00; renovations — approximately $920.00; seats or pews for the Church — $140.00. Labour and material were donated. There was also a good many donations given.

In August, 1959, Rev. William Mayberry came to be our United Church minister for the Edson Trail Pastoral charge which was made up of three districts; Valleyview, Debolt and Bezanson. He served these three Churches every Sunday. Services were held at 10 o'clock at Valleyview, 12 o'clock at Debolt and 2 o'clock at Bezanson. Part of the time, Valleyview held services in the evening instead of early morning. Rev. Mayberry or Bill as most everyone called him was married to Millie and they had two boys, Peter and Timothy, and later a girl, Nancy. Bonnie Knight was organist. Sunday school was held in the basement of the Church.

In 1961, there was a picnic held at the Simmonette River with the congregation, the minister and his family.

While the Mayberrys were here a Manse was built in Valleyview, Alberta to house the present minister and his family and the ones to follow. A manse committee from the three districts was formed, and help was given from the Ladies Aid and United Church womens groups to look after necessary maintenance of the manse. Meetings were held yearly and special ones if necessary. The Mayberrys left to go to Jamaica as missionaries in 1963 and a new minister Rev. Howard Munro and his family came. Howard had been a farmer in southern Alberta when his future wife Eileen James came as a minister there. Howard finished his education and took theology and became a United Church minister and his wife stopped preaching full time and became a mother of two children, Brian and Faith, also a helper in the church as well. They served Edson Trail Pastoral charge for three years. Mae Turner became our organist during his stay here. In the summer of 1964 a memorial church service was held at the old Glen Leslie Church. Bible school was held in the summer holidays besides Sunday School all during the year. In the spring of 1966, Wauneita Ogden went as a delegate for the Edson Trail Pastoral charge with the Munroes to Calgary to the Alberta Conference of the United Church. She stayed with the U.C. minister and his wife (Rev. and Mrs. Stanley Hunt), who had served our area from 1934-37. He had retired but was then a Chaplain for a hospital in Calgary. Now in 1977, they are still living in Calgary. She enjoyed the conference very much, but had a sad surprise when she found out at one of the meetings we would be losing the Munroes, as they were being sent to Fairview, Alberta for the next year starting in August, 1966. Our next minister was Rev. James Beal. His wife and he had three children, two boys, Douglas and Andrew and one girl, Jeanette. In 1967, on June 11th, the minister and congregation held a centennial supper in the Bezanson Church for 45 Senior Citizens to help Alberta celebrate its 100th birthday, and to honor the Senior Citizens of the time.

On September 27 and 28th, 1967 Valleyview hosted Presbytery of the U.C. and the other two charges. Debolt and Bezanson helped by serving some of the lunches, which they also donated.

Bible school was held that summer. Sunday school was held until participation was so lacking that there wasn't enough coming to have it. Finally in the fall of 1968 there were so few active in the church, that it was closed. Some of the people then went to Debolt to services, the ones who really wanted to continue to go to church. It was a really sad day, after all the earlier enthusiasm the community had had, to know that there would be no Protestant church in the district. However, time does go on and changes do occur. Later a Bezanson Community Church was formed.

In the spring of 1969, Miss Chris Schuman, a representative of Village Missions, was informed by Rev. and Mrs. Wilfred Johnson of the need of a Christian work in the Bezanson community due to the fact that the United Church had closed down.

The Village Missions' policy is to place a resident pastor into areas where there is no active church.

In January, 1970, several families decied to make an application to Village Missions for a couple to come into the community to begin services and Sunday School.



Arie, Mae, Gary, Ellie and Leonard de Vos — Dec. 1973.

Arie and May DeVos arrived in September, 1971 to commence their ministry. They took up residence in the Hunter house with their family; Garry, Ellie and Leonard. Sunday school was organized for September 15, with the following teachers; Arie and May DeVos, Lee and Marjorie Snider and Anna Ladwig.

The first board formed on November 4, 1971 consisted of Chairman, Lee Snider, Sec-treas., Anna Ladwig and other board members were; Bob Hunter, Arnold Ladwig and Earl Hay.

After the DeVos' left in September, 1974 for Sicamous, B.C., the Peace River Bible School of Sexsmith assisted with the services until the arrival of Bill, Lorna and Kimmie Powell in May, 1975.

The Powells have continued to keep church services, Sunday school and youth groups going with the aid of good many helpers. Also there are Bible study groups. We know we are in need of all these good things and with support of many people, hopefully our Christian needs will be met now in 1977 and for the future.

Point of Interest



Ready to saw wood. Mildred Patterson, Fred Moon, Des Stark, and Will Jim Stark.



A hunting party at Nellis's, Tom, Lorna and Roger LaValley, Erwin Ferris, Bert Ogden, Lloyd and Bill Nellis, Mabel Hunter, Jacky Grant.



Coming over the Edson Trail.



Bezanson Village.



Threshing Days in Bezanson.

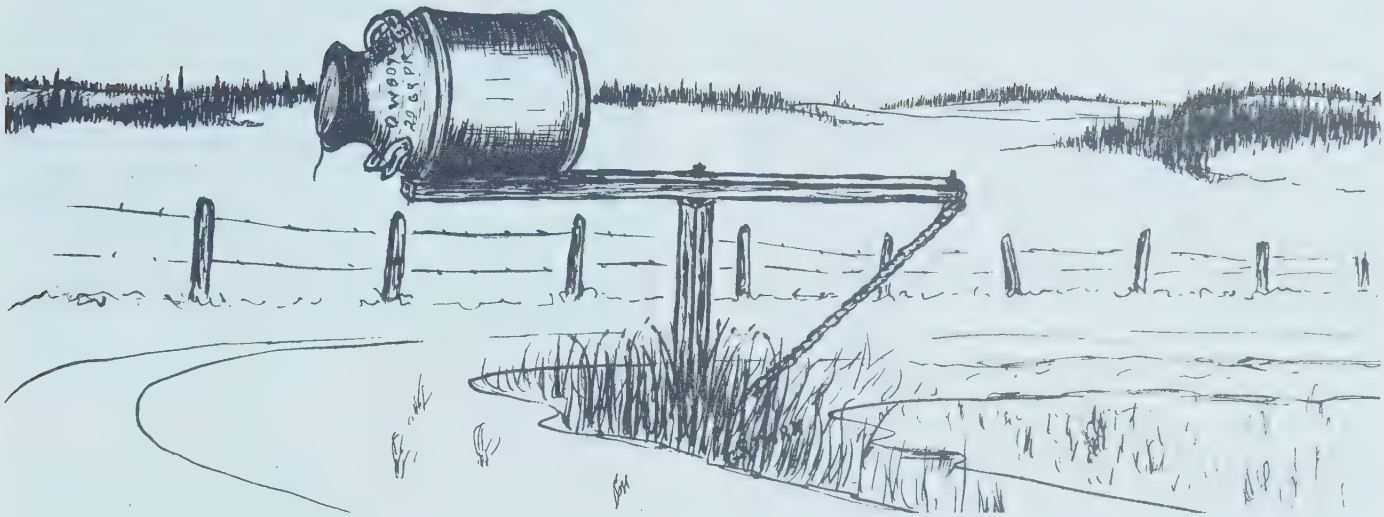


Elmer Bulford on the tower by the river and the Ferry Man's shack.



Red Cross meeting held at Rex Patterson's in 1928. Elizabeth Stark, Mildred Jensen, Marion Ferris, Grandma Moon, Waunetia Patterson, Hazel Hunter, Grace Patterson, Dorothy Leslie, Ken and Bill Leslie, Minnie Patterson, Adda Patterson, Margaret Stark, Gladys Leslie, Mrs. Jensen and Mrs. Allen.

Crystal Creek



Family Histories

NICHOLAS ANDRESS — by Douglas Clarkson

Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Andress, with their daughter Ellen, and sons Ellis, Charles, William and family and Elmer and family came from the United States to Canada in 1912.



Ellis Andress with girl friend in background.



The Grundforsen and Pat Andress families: Back Row: L. to R. Germund Grundforsen, Pat Andress, Mrs. Andress, Mrs. Grundforsen. Front Row: Jennie Grundforsen, Laverne Andress, Meryle Andress. Sitting: Hazel Scott, Laurayne Andress, Rhoda Scott.

On August 29, they started out from Edson, arriving in Grande Prairie on October 5. Nicholas, Charles, and Ellis homesteaded in the Crystal Creek area in 1913, and Elmer and William in 1914. Charles met with misfortune, losing his life in an accident in a sawmill. Mrs. Andress Sr. passed away about 1920. Mr. Andress Sr. is remembered as a spry, amiable old gentleman with a flowing white beard. Elmer with his violin and Ellis with his banjo provided music for many dances in the early days. William and family soon moved to Grande Prairie where they operated a laundry, and later a barber shop. Ellen married one of the Floener boys from Five Mile Creek, and moved away from the district. Nicholas, Ellis, Elmer, and family left the district in 1926 and returned to the United States. One of Elmer's daughters, now Mrs. Parker, visited the district in 1965. She was amazed at the changes and could not believe that was where the old home used to be.

EARL BATES — by Douglas Clarkson

Mr. and Mrs. Earl Bates came from Grande Coulee, Saskatchewan, to the Crystal Creek area in December, 1927. They had one daughter, Helen, aged eight at the time. They lived in a granary 12 x 14 that first winter, building a house in April. In 1929, Earl's brother Curtis Bates, who had been a member of the Regina Roughrider football team, came to help Earl. While here, Curtis had the misfortune to get his left hand in the buzz saw, losing a good portion of the hand. He returned to Grande Coulee that fall and never came back. Christie Bates, who was a cousin of Earl's father, came shortly after Earl arrived and worked for Earl the summer of 1928. Christie was a retired railroad man who had spent many years in the southern United States. He took up a homestead in the Goodwin area, but did not live on it very much. He stayed some time with Steve Parker and worked for the Buffalo Lakes Lumber Co. Christie passed away in the mid 1930's.

Helen Bates passed away in 1936, and is laid to rest in the Glen Leslie Cemetery. Due to ill health, Earl and his wife had a sale, rented their farm, and moved to Victoria in 1944. Mrs. Bates passed away in 1946 and Earl passed on in 1949.

ALFRED W. BINKS

Alfred Binks arrived from England in the spring of 1912 after serving twelve and one-half years in the British Navy. With him came his wife, Ellen and five year old daughter Beatrice. They stayed with brother Charles and family for a short while in Ontario near Peterborough, then Alfred ventured forth to seek his fortune out West, while his family remained in Ontario. He went by rail as far as Edson Trail, then set out on foot over the Edson Trail to file on a homestead in Grande Prairie. Having done that he returned to work on the Edson Trail, where he earned enough to purchase a team of oxen, a sleigh, wagon and plow, returning to the homestead to break some land and put up his small barn and homestead shack.

While he was doing this his family, along with Charles and family, made their way to Edson, where the women and children had found a small tar-paper shack to live in till the men could get back for them.



Cyril Binks on his horse.

The plans were for the families to all make the trip to Grande Prairie in the late fall of 1913 but there was no snow, so all had to wait until the first snowfall which was in February, 1914, when the men could make the trips for them.

While the men were in Grande Prairie the women worked in Edson at day work washing, cleaning, or whatever they could find to do, earning enough to gather plenty of grubstake for the following year, consisting of cases of dried fruit, flour, oatmeal, sugar, tea, salt, and the main staples of life.

After building a flat rack and caboose on their sleigh and loading all their food, bedding, etc., they set out on their journey over the Edson Trail, the trip taking two weeks, arriving at the homesteads on March 8, 1914, in a blinding snow storm.

The first task Alfred undertook was to go some distance north to cut logs for a larger barn, leaving his family to keep the home fires burning. That spring was a busy one. Gradually a few setting hens and a sow were added to the farmstead in return for plowing. A couple of cows were bought from Fletcher Bredin. In the meantime, brother Jack had joined the family. His homestead joined Alfred on the north. On June 1st, 1916 a chubby son was born to the family. In spring of 1917 he got pneumonia, double in fact, and Grandma Turner spent many a day and night to pull him through the critical period. However, after six weeks of anxiety he began to recover.

By this time the fields had grown and power had increased to four oxen and while mother and dad watched over their young son during his illness, young Beatrice managed to harrow the field after dad had seeded it by hand.

Beatrice walked to Kleskun Lake School the summer of 1917, a distance of five miles. In the fall Mr. Robert Cockrane loaned a safe pony so that Beatrice could continue school for a few more weeks, but when winter came this had to be discontinued. In the spring of 1918 her schooling was able to continue,

riding on a small pony which had been caught in the north, now the Teepee Creek district. After this a school was built in the Kleskun Hill district which was only two and one-half miles away. This made it considerably easier for Beatrice and eventually Cyril to attend school and they took all their education there.

On August 19, 1920, a second daughter, Marjorie Hazel was born and on February 11, 1925 a third daughter, Pearline Bernice was born.



Beatrice Binks beside her father's car, 1927.

In 1927 Alfred bought a new car, it was a "Chevrolet Touring Car." It had a soft top, a front windshield, but no windows on the sides, just curtains.

On December 17, 1928, daughter Bernice married Glen Van Schaick and left to set up her own home. They raised four children, two sons Raymond and Alfred, and two daughters Grace and Ruth, who in time gave them twelve grandchildren.

In 1929 the family moved to the Letange (N.E. 17-72-4-W. 6) place from the homestead, as there was a better house and water supply there. They lived here for approximately three years until Alfred bought the S.W. 17-72-4-W. 6 quarter which had previously been homesteaded by a man by the name of Ceely. He had gone overseas and never returned after the war. There were no buildings to speak of on this quarter, only a small sod roof cabin which was situated on the S.E. corner, so Alfred proceeded to build up the farm site. They moved into the new house just before Christmas sometime in the early thirties, possibly 1931. From this time on Marjorie and Pearl, who had been attending Kleskun Hill school, went to Crystal Creek school.

About a year after the move into the new house a large barn was added and the farm site started to take shape.

Alfred was interested in gardening and had a special desire to grow fruit. He planted a few Plum and Crabapple trees but these weren't too successful in bearing fruit as the rabbits continually chewed them off. The plum trees, although they didn't bear fruit, did manage to come back every year, despite the rabbits. The raspberries, strawberries, red and black currants, etc., however, were far too successful according to Marjorie and Pearl, for they were the ones that had to pick them.

When the old car gave out, Alfred purchased another one, a second hand one, from Stojan's Garage in Grande Prairie. This one too was a 1927 Chev., but unlike the old one, this one had windows and a hard top.

Another purchase that added greatly to the household was that of a piano. Pearl took lessons and in the later years played along with Cyril, Walt Lemky and later, Andy Selmark in an orchestra

Cyril married Katherine Lemky on November 22, 1937 and they set up their own place on the Brim quarter.

On December 21, 1942 Marjorie married Gordon Oatway, and a son Harvey and a daughter Muriel were born to this union.

Alfred farmed with horses right up to the time he decided to retire. He had a sale in the early spring of 1944 where he sold his machinery and most of his livestock. Then he bought another car, a "Nash" and drove to Ontario for a two month holiday. After returning home he decided to sell out and move to Ontario permanently. He sold his furniture and remaining livestock and he, Ellen and Pearl, left; but all three had returned to Grande Prairie by the end of the next year. He then bought a house and moved into Grande Prairie.

Pearl married Edwin Gerald Watson, May 24, 1948, and to this union were born three sons; Kenneth, Reginald, and Gregory.

Son Cyril passed away on December 19, 1955. The following February 1st, 1956 Alfred passed away after a short illness. Ellen moved in with her daughter Marjorie in the fall of 1956, where she remained until her passing October 6, 1964. At the time of her passing, she had nine grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

CYRIL BINKS

On November 22, 1937 Cyril Binks and Katherine (Tena) Lemky were married in the Presbyterian Church Manse in Grande Prairie.

Cyril had purchased the Brimm's quarter (S.E. 17) and with the help of Smithy Polton and Bill Hanna, two neighbors, had built a small log cabin, in which he and his bride set up housekeeping.

On October 25, 1938, their first son Robert Frank was born and when Bob was nearly three, on September 13, 1941 a second son Dennis Lavern was born.

When Dennis was about six months old, the spring of 1942, Cyril and Tena rented the Wilson place, N.W. 8-72-4-W. 6, formerly Charles Binks homestead, and they lived there until the fall of 1945. While there, they bought an old Chev. pick-up truck and a white horse they named Gyp. This horse was purchased from some Indians who were camping along the creek for the price of two colts. As this was wartime and the Americans were in the process of building the Alaska Highway, there was a constant stream of traffic by their door. Trucks and heavy construction equipment

travelled through night and day, and as if the noise wasn't bad enough, the main road became almost impassable. There were ruts so deep you could hardly drive a team and wagon over it, let alone a vehicle, and if you got caught in the convoy at all it was almost impossible to get out.

Cyril was in the process of buying his folks land which consisted of the original homestead, (N.W. 17-72-4-W. 6) Jack's homestead (S.W. 20-72-4-W. 6) and the Ceely quarter (N.W. 17-72-4-W. 6) where the buildings were, and in the spring of 1945 he bought a Case tractor to aid in the farming of this land as well as the Brim quarter. That fall Bob started to school and on October 25, 1945, Cyril and his family moved into the homeplace.

When Bob started school they were afraid to let him ride Gyp because they thought she was too flighty for him. They borrowed a saddle horse from a neighbor, Ole Lindjord. The problem was, she was so foxy that she would take him halfway to school, then turn around and come home. They had many fights with this horse, and Bob ended up late for school almost every morning. The next year they decided to take their chances with Gyp.

In the spring of 1946 the telephone came in and the excitement of this was only topped by the birth of a baby daughter, Phyllis, just a short time later, on May 3, 1946. Also, just about this time, Cyril purchased another car, a Graham Page. This car was a little bigger than the old pick-up and wouldn't fit into the garage, so it was decided to move the cabin off the Brimm's quarter into the yard, and make a garage out of it. This was quite a job and it took four horses and George Knight's tractor to move it over.

The Graham Page was later replaced by a one ton Fargo truck, but this proved pretty crowded when the whole family went anywhere.

By this time Dennis had started to school and the trail he and Bob rode over went right past Mr. Steve Parker's place. Mr. Parker had a number of horses and one in particular that Bob liked was a little Bay. Mr. Parker apparently was aware of this for when he sold out, he gave the horse to Bob. He named her Tricks. Later on when Phyllis started school they hitched Tricks and Gyp to the cutter and drove to school on cold winter days.

In the late forties, Cyril became acquainted with the lumber business, working for one winter for Bickell in a lumber camp along with his neighbor, Andy Salmark. Later, some farmer neighbors got together and logged some timber south, on the banks of Bear Creek. They sawed this lumber, using Nels Meyers sawmill. Then they hauled the lumber home by team and sleigh to be planed.

Cyril decided to try the lumber business and he formed a partnership with Andy Salmark and Harry Logan of Crooked Creek. They became the Binks, Logan, and Salmark Lumber Co. They used Nels Meyers sawmill, contracting under Lloyd Moore and logged the Puskwaskua area, skidding trees out of the bush with horses, one of which was Prince. The next year the mill was moved to Big Mountain and contracted under Grande Prairie Lumber Co. There was also a change in parntership from Harry Logan to Ron Robinson, a neighbor who had moved onto the Letange place. The company now became Binks, Robinson, and Salmark. This year a D4 Cat and a 1949 three ton Chev truck was added to skid out of the bush and the horses were used in the yard. By this time Prince was becoming fairly familiar with his job, and as a reward Andy Salmark would feed him chocolate bars. He really looked forward to this, and developed quite a sweet tooth. Even later, after Andy had left, he still managed to get his chocolate bar from someone else.

The next few years saw more changes, the partnership became Binks and Salmark, and eventually Binks Lumber Co. More equipment was added, horses remained in the yard and Old Prince, as he was now called, remained quite a favorite with the men.

During the time the lumber company was getting started, however, there were also changes taking place on the farm. Power had come to the rural areas, and with it came more modern conveniences, and as well, bigger and better farm machinery. Combines were replacing threshing machines, the main road now had pavement and in the fall of 1954 when Bob was ready to start Grade ten, the school bus was introduced with Lyle Kuykendall driving, and Bob, Dennis, and Phyllis, now in Grade three, started attending school in Grande Prairie.

On December 19, 1955 a bush accident claimed Cyril's life.

The family, with the help of a neighbor, Jack Dorscheid, continued with the sawmill for the rest of that year. They ran the mill the next year but decided after this to use the logging equipment and go skidding for the Grande Prairie Lumber Co. They did this until the fall of 1959, when they set up the sawmill again. They ran for that year, but as Grande Prairie Lumber Co. was changing hands, and Bob and Dennis were more interested in farming than the lumber business, they decided to retire the sawmill.

On May 20, 1960 Bob married Dorene Rycroft from the Teepee Creek district, and they moved onto the farm, buying a little house from Bruce and Helen McDonald and moving it there. The following spring, April 9, 1961, their first son, Robert Kenneth (Ken) was born, and a week later Tena married John Morency and moved along with Phyllis to Grande Prairie.

Bob and Dennis continued to farm the land and that spring, also, Bob and Dorene purchased the Sandy Cameron quarter (N.E. 8-72-4-W. 6), from Donald Cameron.

One year later, on April 6, 1962, Dennis married Cheryle Foster of Bad Heart and they moved into the old house. They had two children while they lived on the farm. Christine Gail was born June 19, 1963, and Russell Lavern was born February 11, 1965. In the spring of 1968, Dennis decided to try something else, and moved off the farm. One year later, their third child, Darren, was born on September 20, 1969.

By this time Bob and Dorene had been blessed with three more sons, Raymond Allan on July 28, 1962, Bradley Lynn on August 16, 1963, and Trevor Mark on September 6, 1968.

Another event that had taken place during this time was Phyllis' marriage on November 13, 1965 to Charles Foster, Cheryle's brother. They eventually had two

daughters, Ann on May 6, 1970, and Deanna on February 27, 1974.

Bob and Dorene purchased the farm in 1968, when Dennis decided to leave. They had one more son, Evan Blaine, born February 8, 1972. A couple of years later, they purchased two more quarters of land (E.½ of 20) from the Earl Hay family, who had moved onto the Letange place, and at the present time are running a mixed farming operation with the help of their sons.

JOHN BLONKE

John Blonke came into the Crystal Creek district in the fall of 1928. Buying a quarter section of land from Henry Fortier, he worked the first winter at Buffalo Lakes Saw Mill.

In 1942, he met Kathleen Stelfox, and in January, 1943, we were married. Two children were born — Arnold in 1943 and Donald in 1948.

John and family continued to live in that area, farming until 1966, when we sold and moved to Grande Prairie.

FRED BOYD

Fred Boyd was born March 13, 1894, in Arundel, Quebec. As the youngest son in a family of six boys and six girls, there were certain duties for him to perform, such as taking the milk to the cheese factory, keeping the wood box full, and disposing of the kittens the family cat would produce.



Mr. and Mrs. Fred Boyd on their Golden Wedding. Seated: Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hillman.

Fred, and his brother Henry, came to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan on a harvest excursion in 1912. Fred arrived in the Crystal Creek area in February, 1913, helping his brother Bill and brother-in-law Edmund Cooke haul freight over the Edson Trail. He made two more trips over the trail, helping Bill and Edmund bring in a sawmill, steam engine, and a threshing separator. He homesteaded the S.E. 6-72-4-W. 6 and later bought the quarter adjoining it on the west.

Fred married Faye Percival in September, 1921. Faye had come to the area with her mother from Michigan. Five children were born to them, three girls and twin boys, Iris, Mavis, Corrine, and Harmon and Marshall.

In October, 1922, Fred and Faye had the misfortune to lose their house by fire, which caused them great hardship, but they persevered and built a new one the next year, in which they still live.

Fred and Faye are retired now, and enjoy visits from their children and grandchildren, and many friends. They celebrated their fifty-fifth wedding anniversary in 1976. Harmon and Marshall have taken over the farm.

Iris (Nelson) lives in Edmonton. Mavis (Ames) lives in Grande Prairie, and Corrine and her husband Bill Rutberg live in a house on the corner of Fred's land. Bill is a heavy-duty mechanic, and works in Grande Prairie.

BILL BOYD

William Thomas (Bill) Boyd was born September 26, 1882 in the village of Arundel, Quebec, the third oldest of a family of six boys and six girls. His parents, John and Elizabeth Boyd, owned a small farm, but soil was poor and rocky, not very productive, so as soon as the family was old enough, they left home to fend for themselves.

At an early age, an older brother Henry went to work in logging camps in winter and did farm work, or anything they could get in summer sometimes at home to help with haying. The first winters they worked in Quebec and Ontario but as soon as they were a little older, they went to the United States, where they worked several years, winter and summer, in the Dakotas and New York States.

He first located some land in the Didsbury area, but decided he didn't like it, so didn't prove up. He went to Edmonton and worked for John Walters who was in the logging and sawmill business.

Soon he and his brother-in-law, Edmund (Red) Cooke, formed a partnership and went into logging in the Edson area in the winter and contract — in the summer.

Early in 1911, Bill and Edmund came over the Edson Trail and settled on land east of Grande Prairie. Bill's homestead was S.W.¼ 30-71-4-W6, also South African script N.½ 30-71-4-6. Edmund homesteaded S.E.¼ 30-71-4-6 and script S.½ 31-71-4-6. They also acquired some timber on Smoky River for their sawmill. They built small log cabins on their homesteads to prove up, but their main headquarters were on their scripts. They each had larger hewn log homes on their own land with a common barn for their stock. Bill's original log home still stands where it was built.

They made several trips back over the trail, bringing their sawmill and farm equipment. They brought one of the first steam engines and threshing machines into the country. The next several years were spent sawmilling and farming. Most of Bill's brothers had also settled in the area, staying with and working for him until they became established on their own places.

In 1916, Bill went back east with Neil Vance who had also homesteaded in the district and had married Bill's sister, Edith. Bill worked in the Noxon machine factory that year and met Jessie Vance, whom he married on February 17, 1917. After a honeymoon, they bought furniture and headed west arriving in Grande Prairie on the train. What a change for Jessie,

who was born in Ingersoll, Ontario on November 27, 1888, the third oldest in a family of six daughters and three sons, was educated as a stenographer, and also worked as a telephone operator.

Jessie had never been on a farm or around livestock, the only horses she had seen were on a milk wagon or dray team. What an adjustment she must now make in her way of life. She had also quite a bit of training in Scottish dancing, something she was always very fond of.

When Bill and Jessie first arrived, they lived in a small house on Hugh Boyd's homestead, north of Bill's, until they built their own house on N.E.¼ 30-71-4-6. It was a busy year. Their home was frame construction and fairly large by the standards of the day. It still stands today, and has been lived in continuously by the family until 1975. Sometime in the next year, Jessie's mother and her youngest sister, Isobel, came west and stayed with Jessie and Bill.

Their oldest child, Mary (now Mary Berry of Victoria, B.C.) was born April 10, 1918. Mary has two grown children, Bill in Nova Scotia and Ilean in B.C. Don, the oldest of six boys, was born February 16, 1920. Don has a daughter and three boys, all grown and live in the Grande Prairie area. Don still lives on a farm in the same area where he was raised. Bill was born January 6, 1922, has a daughter who lives in Yellowknife, N.W.T., and two sons in the Grande Prairie area. He still lives on a farm in the district. His family also lives around here. He and his sons farm the old home, which now belongs to Grant. Jim was born June 28, 1924, has two sons and two daughters, lives on a farm in the district, as does his family live in the district. Grant was born December 8, 1925, has two girls and three boys, they all live in Grande Prairie. Keith was born December 18, 1930, has a daughter and two sons. Keith lives on Bill's original homestead. His family also live in the Grande Prairie area. Neill, the youngest, was born May 25, 1935, has a family of two girls and a boy. Neill and family live in Edmonton.

Jessie and Bill lived a mile and three-quarters from the Crystal Creek school where their family all received their grade school education. In the early years when the oldest were small, it was always a concern as there was bush most of the way to school. In the summer, Bill blazed a path through the bush across the quarter north of home for the children to follow so they wouldn't become lost. In the winter, they had to be driven or bundled up and put on horseback. Teachers helped them when they got to school and sent them home again safely. To see that the family got a good education was always an important thing to Jessie and Bill. When it came time for the older ones, the closest high school was in Grande Prairie, then Five Mile Creek for the middle ones, who had to finish in Grande Prairie. The youngest two took their high school in Grande Prairie also. High school books and tuition and room and board had to be paid by parents in those days. Also, University education had to be supported when the youngest attended.

Two of Jessie's greatest worries in those days was the problem of water supply, and the worry of fire. She melted snow in the winter, and water had to be hauled from shallow dug wells in the summer. They drilled several holes but none was successful. The house was heated with wood stoves and had long strings of stove pipe to the chimney. Chimneys had to be cleaned regularly or they would catch fire and sometimes burn the houses.

Their farms were all cleared by hand in those days, and the land was broken with horses. The people found time to clear and break their land and raise their families. It wasn't until years later that Jessie had any conveniences such as washing machines, etc., although they had an automobile since early 1920's. Some years they didn't run it at all and never in winter as there were only trails for roads.

Shortly after Jessie and Bill arrived in Grande Prairie, Bill and Edmund Cooke dissolved their partnership. Bill took up full-time farming. Edmund stayed in the logging and sawmill business.

Bill never lost his love of the woods and spent as much of his time as he could with his boys in the woods.

Bill and Jessie always found time to take part in any community projects that were going on in the district, always there with a helping hand to anyone in need. As the family grew older, they encouraged them to participate in sports of any kind, but had a special love for fastball. There was always time to go to ball games, and how the boys loved it.

In 1951, Jessie and Bill left the home farm and retired to Grande Prairie, never complaining about their lives on the farm. They never regarded their pioneering days as hardship but as a way of life which they had chosen, even the days of the Edson Trail, Bill thought of it more as an adventure than a hardship. They both believed that the Peace River Country and Crystal Creek District and its people, to be the greatest in the world.

In 1957 on March 12th, Bill passed away at the age of 74. Jessie lived on in their home in Grande Prairie until the last years which she spent with son Keith and family, to pass away June 14th, 1976, at the age of 87.

CAMERON BROTHERS — by Douglas Clarkson

Donald and Alexander (Sandy) Cameron came from Scotland soon after the turn of the century, and worked for several years in Manitoba. They then came



Cameron Bros. home, 1976.

CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

DISCHARGE CERTIFICATE

War Service Badge) Class "A" No. 5 N 8

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that No. 505877 (Rank) Sapper

Name (in full) Alexander Cameron enlisted in

the Canadian Engineers

CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE at Edmonton on the 25th

day of July 1916.

HE served in France - 10th Battalion C.E.

and is now discharged from the service by reason of Demobilization.
~~Medical Unfitness.~~

THE DESCRIPTION OF THIS SOLDIER on the DATE below is as follows:—

Age 40 years

Height 5 feet 10½ inches

Complexion Fair

Eyes Blue

Hair Grey

Marks or Scars Mole on left side of chest.

A. Cameron
Signature of Soldier

Date of Discharge No. 2 DISTRICT DEPOT JUN 18 1919 TORONTO.

Issuing Officer

For O.C. No. 2 District Depot.

Rank

JUN 18 1919

Date 19

N.B.—As no duplicate of this Certificate will be issued, any person finding same is requested to forward it in an unstamped envelope to the Secretary, Militia Council, Ottawa, Canada.

M.F.B. 39.
1049-D.P.-300M-11-18.
H.Q. 1772-39-882.

farther west. Donald worked hauling freight for the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway in the vicinity of Tete Jaune Cache. Sandy worked on the barges on the Fraser River, and also worked at making railroad ties in that same area. They filed on their homesteads in this district in 1912 where they lived the rest of their lives. Sandy served in the Canadian Armed Forces during World War I. They ran a stopping place for travellers on the Edson Trail, which passed near their home.

From 1919 until 1929, they had the only feed grinding outfit in the area. They kept an accurate account of this business and the record still exists. Nearly everyone who lived in the area during that time has their name recorded in the book. The first entry is June 24, 1919, Mr. Currie, 9 sacks at .15 — $1.35. April

6, 1929, Tom McFetridge, 45 min. — $1.50 is the last entry. There are 2252 entries in the book.

In 1954, Sandy went to Edmonton to obtain treatment for corns on his feet which were causing him great discomfort. While there, he disappeared and no trace has ever been found. Donald continued to live on the place until he passed away suddenly in January, 1962.

CARR FAMILY

In July, 1947, the Ole Lindjord farm of Kleskun Hill was purchased by C. Carr and Sons of Cut Knife, Saskatchewan, and the same year, Bert Carr and his cousin Charlie Robinson moved to the district. The next year, Bert returned to Saskatchewan to attend university and George Carr moved in to take over the farm.

Charlie stayed in the district until 1951, farming and working for Jim Clarkson and L. (Shorty) Withers, then moved to Vancouver. Charlie's brother, Ron, came up in 1949 to farm and work, and left for Edmonton in 1952. In the years he was here, he also associated with the late Cyril Binks in a sawmill venture. George Carr remained on the farm until 1953, when he moved to the Blueberry Mountain area to homestead and then to the Debolt area in 1963. He married Mildred Platt of Goodwin in 1953, and they, with their two children Brian and Diann live in Grande Prairie.

To a kid from Saskatchewan, it was a beautiful farm, with its flowing wells and view of the mountains, its good neighbors, and a feeling of home.

MARTIN CLARKSON FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Clarkson came originally from New Brunswick. They moved to the west coast around 1900, living first in New Westminister, and later in Chilliwack. In May, 1919 they moved to Grande Prairie, purchasing the S.W. 4-72-4-W6, which was known as the Gilmore homestead. They were accompanied by their five children; Albion (Slim), Gladys, Jennie, James and Douglas. Mr. Clarkson's brother Thomas joined them shortly afterwards. Thomas, or Tom, as he was always known, homesteaded on what is known as Clarkson Hill, near Sturgeon Lake. Clarkson Hill and Clarkson Valley were named after him. Tom passed away in Kelowna, B.C. in January, 1964. Albion followed the mechanical trade, being a steam engineer and later a mechanic for Canadian Utilities. He passed away in 1966 at the age of 70. Gladys married Gerald Carveth and they are now retired and live in Grande Prairie. Jennie married Jock McDonald and lived in the district until retirement in 1954. Jock passed away in 1973. Jennie still lives in Grande Prairie. Their two sons still farm in the district. James married Gertrude Rumohr, and lives on what was known as the Marfleet homestead. They have one daughter, Marion, who teaches school in Calgary. Douglas lives on land farmed for many years, by Earl Bates. Mrs. Clarkson passed away in 1949 at age 74. Mr. Clarkson passed away in 1960 at age 91.



Martin Clarkson breaking, 1927.



Mr. and Mrs. Martin Clarkson on their Golden Wedding.



Mr. and Mrs. Martin Clarkson.

THOMAS EDMUND COOKE — by Douglas Clarkson

Born in Arundel, Quebec, in 1880, Mr. Cooke became an expert sawmill operator at an early age. He and his brother-in-law, Bill Boyd, arrived in Grande Prairie by saddle horse on July 1, 1911. Both located their land in the Crystal Creek area. In the winter of 1912-13, Cooke and Boyd hauled in a traction steam engine and sawmill and set up on the flat on the west side of the Smoky River, where the present highway crosses. Old-timers recall that there was a beautiful stand of spruce timber on that flat. Much of the lumber for the original town of Bezanson was sawed there. Mr. Cooke recalled years later that Cooke and Boyd still had a mortgage on the town of Bezanson.

Bill Boyd went farming soon after, and Mr. Cooke carried on in the sawmill business for the rest of his life. In 1966, at the age of 86 he set up his mill for the last time on Spring Creek in the Dimsdale district. At one time Mr. Cooke owned five threshing outfits, three steam powered and two gas powered. In 1919 Mr. Cooke built a house in Grande Prairie and moved from the Crystal Creek district. He and Mrs. Cooke, the former Emma Boyd, had five children; Ramona, Eunice, Boyd, Donald, and Lois. Ramona lost her sight at an early age, but became an accomplished pianist. She passed away in 1934. Eunice lives in Spirit River. Boyd founded and built what is now known as the East Side Grocery. Boyd now lives in Chilliwack, B.C. Donald lives in Grande Prairie and Lois lives in Edmonton. Mr. Cooke passed away in 1967.

JAMES COUTTS — by Douglas Clarkson

James Coutts filed on the S.W. 3-72-4 in 1914. He left the district as soon as he had proved up. He was last contacted by a local resident in 1949. At that time he was working for a logging company at Youbou on Cowichan Lake V.I. in B.C. He had been operating a speeder on the logging railroad for over 25 years and was expecting to retire in two more years.

ELMER DAVIDSON — by Douglas Clarkson

Elmer Davidson homesteaded the East ½ 28-71-4 in 1912. From the writings of the late A. McQuarie, the first government engineer in the district, Mr. Davidson did quite a bit of work for the government. In 1911, he brought the cable for the first ferry on the Smoky from Edson. He located and built the first road on the east bank of the Smoky, where the highway now crosses. He also built the first road that was surveyed on the south hill at Dunvegan. In 1919, he sold his homestead to Mr. Osro Marcy. He then located in the Watino area. Many years later, when he was an old man, he disappeared and was the object of an extensive search. If my memory serves me correctly, it was found that he had fallen in an old well.

DICK DEERING — by Douglas Clarkson

Dick Deering homesteaded the N.½ 1-72-5 W. 6. He was a veteran of the South African War. He had been a hunter and scout during the Indian wars in the western United States. He had worked on the Mississippi River boats. He had a very colorful life. I am sure the story of his life would have made an interesting book.

He was used to hardship and lived a very frugal life. His house was partly dug in ground. It had no floor and was heated by an earthen fireplace. He trapped several years on the Wapiti River where he lived in a shelter, which consisted of some poles leaned against a tree and covered with branches, mosses, and snow. Some time around 1930, he went to southern B.C. to find a lost gold mine he was sure he could find. He was heard from once or twice, and then no more. What became of him was never known by local residents.

JOHNNIE AND MABEL FESTER — by Douglas Clarkson

The Festers came here from Czar, Alberta, in 1928. They had planned to go on to the Dawson Creek Country, but they liked the Crystal Creek District so much, they decided to buy here.

Their family were: Margaret, George, Homer, and Melvin. Vernie was born while they lived here. They bought four good horses, some farm machinery, and built a log house and other buildings. The two older children went to school. They all worked very hard to make a farm and garden spot. Times were very hard through those years, and after four years they decided to go back to Czar, so they sold out and moved back. They had three more children after they left here, a boy and two girls. All married except Melvin. He makes his home with his mother in Czar. Margaret and her husband have a large cattle ranch in Wyoming. George is in oil, and Ralph is a city bus driver in Edmonton. Johnnie passed away some years ago, just after they celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

JOHN (JACK) FRITZ — by Douglas Clarkson

Jack Fritz came to the area a veteran of World War I. He filed on N.W. 20-71-4 and S.E. 19-71-4. He was known as a hard worker and a very able horseman. He passed away in 1923.

GERMUND GRUNDFORSEN — by Jennie McNally

My father was born in Trandstrand, Sweden, May 20, 1869 and my mother, Hilda Johnson was born in Trysil Norway, July 30, 1880. Shortly after they were married, they immigrated to the U.S.A., arriving in North Dakota in August, 1903, and in 1911 settled in McLean County, renting farmland near Underwood, and there in April 22, 1916, I, Jennie McNally, was born.

Through the years, weather conditions became very adverse, and this, coupled with hearing much of Western Canada and the Peace River Country, as it was well advertised by the Canadian Government Agent in North Dakota, my parents decided to hold an auction sale and then go to Grande Prairie, Alberta, to buy land.

We came by train, arriving in Grande Prairie, May 25, 1919, bringing only our personal effects, including a sum of money which my father carried in a money belt he wore. We stayed at the immigration hall. My father went out to look over land that was listed for sale. He was accompanied by his brother, Uncle Peder, who had come here with us to see this country. The land east of Grande Prairie was appealing. Their last day out they stayed overnight at the home of two homesteaders, Bill and Jock McDonald, and next



Germund Grunforsen at Carl Johnsons, 1941.

morning arrived at the farm of P. J., Pat McCann, it originally being his homestead, which he had proved up and now had it listed for sale. On June 4, my parents bought his farm S.E. 4-72-4-W6 in the Crystal Creek School district, along with his household effects, livestock, and machinery.

1 span of mares and two colts	$ 350.00
1 black 3 year old cow and two heifer calves	200.00
1 Oliver 16 inch stubble plow, and rolling coulter	35.00
1 dresser	14.00
1 stove	20.00
3 chairs	3.00
1 grey team of geldings	475.00
Approximately 25 hens with chickens	25.00
2 collars for	8.00
Extra set of collars, 2 extra pair hames, set of harness without breeching for	60.00
2 sets wiffletrees, scoop shovel, saw, and fork	10.00
Total	$1,200.00

Grande Prairie, Alberta,
June 4th, 1919.

I, P. J. McCann hereby agree to sell the above described property to Germund Grundfarsen, which he agrees to purchase for twelve hundred ($1200.00) Dollars, all to be paid in cash as soon as his money arrives from Underwood, North Dakota. Five Hundred ($500.00) Dollars to be paid down in cash or placed to credit of P. J. McCann in Union Bank of Canada Grande Prairie Branch. All to be paid inside of sixty days from June 9th, 1919.

Witnessed by

Soon we were settled in our new home and my uncle went back to his home in North Dakota. No time was lost to plant a garden and with the crop already seeded, the only cultivated land left was the fire guard, and there our first garden was planted, with good results.

One of the first pieces of new machinery my father purchased was a set of wooden harrows from Crummy Bros. in Grande Prairie, which are now on display at the Grande Prairie Pioneer Museum.

Taxes the first year were $37.35, and of this, $10.90 was school taxes. George Stewart from Bezanson did threshing through the country in the early days, including ours, with his steam threshing outfit. In 1920 his rates were 11c per bushel for wheat, and 8c per bushel for oats. My father was a member of the Alberta Wheat Pool, membership number 28051, from 1923 until he retired from farming.

We received our mail at Glen Leslie Post Office until Rural Route No. 1 mail delivery out of Grande Prairie came into effect.

The first winter we were here, my father made himself a pair of skis. He enjoyed skiing and often went for our mail on them. A couple of years later, he made me a pair of skis and a hand sleigh. My mother enjoyed knitting and did a lot of knitting for us.

We lived in a friendly community and people had time for visiting. Many a game of Norwegian Whist was played in our home.

I attended the Crystal Creek School one and a half miles away. I found the first few weeks in Grade 1 very frustrating. I spoke broken English and the teacher could hardly understand me. She was kind and patient and soon all went well. The second year, I attended school only a short time as I had the Whooping Cough from fall until late spring. The following year I took Grade 2. Miss E. L. Reid taught the year I finished Grade 8.

My father passed away April 24, 1948, at 79 years and my mother passed away May 2, 1960 in her 80th year. Funeral services for each were held in the Glen Leslie Church and were laid to rest in the Glen Leslie Cemetery.

The farm was rented for several years, and then in the fall of 1970 I sold the farm to Jack Molenar, whose farm adjoins this quarter.

On November 18, 1936, I married Pat McNally and last year we celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary. We have two daughters and five grandchildren. Patricia Marie, born July 3, 1940 lives in Clairmont and has two children, Patrick Murland and Gina Marie Rigler. Jennie Doreen was born November 17, 1952, and married Robert Blum, February 25, 1972. They have three children — Randal Sheldon, Bobbi Marie, and Leslie Ann. They live in Grande Prairie.

Late in the year 1949, we moved up on the Alaska Highway, living two years in B.C. and two years in the Yukon when Pat was working for H.M.E., and since then we have made our home in Grande Prairie.

BILL HANNA & SMITH POLTON (SMITHY) — by Douglas Clarkson

Bill Hanna and Smith Polton bought a quarter section on Kleskun Hill in 1927. They worked together for several years and then Hanna, who was much the older, retired and Smithy carried on alone.

They were both great storytellers. Bill Hanna could play the violin and often played for dances. He was interesting to watch as well as listen to, as his face changed expression as the tune changed. Bill Hanna passed away sometime in the mid 1950's.

Due to ill health, Smithy sold out to Douglas Clarkson in 1954, and returned to Starbuck, Manitoba, where he had lived before coming here. He had relatives there. Smithy passed away October 22, 1976, at the age of 87 after a lengthy illness.

GORDON HANSON

We homesteaded in the Valleyview district in 1930. It was in 1938 we started working for Crummy and Croken on their farm in the Crystal Creek district. Gordon was there for the harvest, and our son Stan and I came out there in the winter with the mail truck from Sturgeon Lake with Mr. Trottier. He left us off at Glen Leslie Store and post office. Gordon came with the sleigh and picked us up there, after a lengthy wait. We then went to Crummy and Croken's place, in that dark and dreary house. We soon got to know our neighbors and they were all very friendly. Stan started school at Crystal Creek in Grade Two.

George Crummy stayed at the farm until his health failed. We sold our homestead and bought a lot in Valleyview town. We stayed at Crummy and Croken's farm until 1945. We then rented Earl Bates farm for five years, as they retired to B.C. In 1950 we bought the half section farm from Tom Schultz.

When Stan was through school, he worked in the Grande Prairie Co-op Store, until he joined the Army in 1951. Stan married Lohrna Loberg in 1953.

We sold our farm in 1967, and moved to Valleyview, and built on our lot there, where we now are retired.

We made so many friends, and have lots of fond memories of the time that we lived in the Crystal Creek District.

EARL HAY

Earl Melville Hay moved to the Crystal Creek area from his ¼ section near Melfort, Saskatchewan in 1963. He and his son, Lyell, had visited the area during the winter months, hoping to find a larger farm than they were operating in Saskatchewan. They purchased three quarters, located N.E.¼ Section 17, Twp. 72-W. 6, from Mike Kapalka through a realtor, and made the transferral of farming and housing belongings by train, a four day journey. They brought about fifty head of purebred Yorkshire breeding stock and a white all purpose mare in addition to the usual paraphernalia, but somehow lost a good farm dog in transit.

Earl's wife, Florence, and daughter Sharon (aged 16) joined the men at the end of the school year. The family lived in the frame house built by Kapalka on the home quarter; Sharon graduated in 1966, then worked locally and in Edmonton. Lyell, in addition to helping Earl run the farm, worked out, mostly on construction jobs until completing his training as a welder, after which he worked at North Canadian Forest Industries.

Sharon married a local man in July, 1972, and the young couple soon moved into a trailer, also on the home quarter. In August of that year, the family suffered the loss of Earl, who died in a traffic accident while visiting a married daughter, Daryl Crerar in Vernon.

In 1975, two of the three quarters were sold to a neighbor, Bob Binks, who also does the land work on the remaining quarter. Lyell married in April of 1976, and he and his wife Kathlene live in the old house. Both are employed off the farm, she as a school teacher in Grande Prairie, and he as a welder. The house has undergone quite a lot of renovation lately, but is still heated by an oil furnace, and draws the water for its pressure system (installed in 1967) from a nearby spring-fed well.

Unfortunately, we seem to have missed the era of great community involvement, although we would like to see more of our neighbors. If, of course, we aren't too busy making or spending money!

BERT AND LEAH HAYES — by Douglas Clarkson

Bert Hayes came to the Grande Prairie Country in 1913 from Oakland, California. He took up a homestead in the Crystal Creek District, and built a log cabin, a log barn, and other buildings. When he had things in shape he sent to California for his wife. The railroad came as far as Pruden's Crossing in 1915, so that was where she came to, the present town of Watino; from there she came on a river boat to Bezanson, where Bert met her.

They cleared and proved up the homestead, and in 1920, Bert left the country and never came back. Joe McLaughlin worked for Mrs. Hayes for some years, running the farm. In 1928, she sold her farm to Roy and Roxy Wheeler. Joe left and went to Prince George, B.C. Mrs. Hayes moved to another farm, where she kept house for Bill Collins for a few years. They moved to the Shortreed farm which Bill had rented, and in the dry year of 1937 they had a fire which destroyed nearly all they had; all the buildings were burned. The Wheelers had given up her farm and moved away by this time, so they moved back to the old home farm. Leah was already in poor health from a developing cancer, so they soon sold everything and moved to B.C., where she passed away. She was a good neighbor, and a wonderful cook and housekeeper.

CECIL JOHNSTON — by Douglas Clarkson

Cecil and Osa Johnston came here in 1911, from Ingersoll, Ontario. They had one daughter, Jean. They shipped machinery and household furnishings from the east, and they had a Cadillac car, which seemed like pure luxury to us. I loved their house. It was large and low, made of very large logs and a wide low overhanging roof. They had a fieldstone fireplace in the living room, a beautiful work. They had oak flooring which had come from the east and leather sofas and large chairs, a piano and one whole end of the living room was bookcases filled with books. All this seemed so lovely to us who were just getting started and didn't have much.



Mrs. Cecil Johnson.



Cecil Johnson and the teacher Miss Dyde.



The Cecil Johnson fireplace. All that is left of a pioneer home. Old timers recall that this fireplace was built at a cost of $12.00.

Cecil was interested in sports and got all the local young men interested in playing baseball. He managed and coached the team, and they were very good. Deep Creek Ball Team won a lot of games. The imprint of the ball diamond showed at the front of their house for years, until it was plowed and made into a field. The old house is gone now, but the lower part of the fireplace still marks the spot, a memory of an early pioneer. They left in 1923, and we never saw them again.

ELLSWORTH KIMBLE FAMILY

Ellsworth and I were married in 1950 and live on the home place. We have five children; Donald (Tony) living in Edmonton where he teaches school. William (Billy) working out. MaryAnn, married to Guy Lobban and living in Stony Plain, they have one son Dennis. Debbie going to college in Grande Prairie to become a teacher, she is living at home. Daniel (Danny) is living at home and attending the Composite High School in Grande Prairie.

HERMAN KIMBLE FAMILY

By the year 1919 good farming land was becoming very expensive in the state of Minnesota. The fertile land free for homesteading in the Peace River country sounded most attractive to my father, Herman Kimble and grandfather, Tony Dorscheid who were farming in Cottonwood County. In March of that year Grandpa and his friend Mr. Marcy from Windom, Minnesota took the train to Grande Prairie, with the intention of filing on homesteads.

When they arrived they found that all the good land had been taken. However, a man named Peshong from Pierre, South Dakota had a half-section for sale, near Glen Leslie, which Dad and Grandpa bought. Grandpa later took a homestead on the lighter soil a mile to the South. Dad did not want to lose his homestead rights on poor soil so he never did use them. In June, Dad brought a carload of machinery, horses and his model-T car by train to Grande Prairie. In his youth he had travelled all over the United States. He preferred Northern Alberta to any place he had been and was content to spend the rest of his life there.

On July 16th, Dad's brother Bert, my mother and I arrived in Grande Prairie. Usually it took three to four days, sometimes a week for the train to cover the stretch from Edmonton to Grande Prairie but we were lucky — our train made it in thirty-six hours. Dad used to tell how when he came the train would often get off the tracks and they would get out and pick the luscious wild strawberries while the train was being put back on the rails. Mother says she did not mind leaving Cottonwood County where she had grown up — she was very young and regarded it as an adventure. She says she loved the Peace River country when she saw it and has loved it ever since. She never wanted to go back to the states to live. When she visited there in later years everything seemed much smaller than she had remembered — the hills that had seemed big when she lived there seemed so small. During the first month we lived in a log house on the Crowe place while Dad and Uncle Bert built a barn near the little log house on the quarter section that was Grandpa's. Uncle Bert helped us move in and then returned to the states.

My sister Violet was born in that little log house during a blizzard in December. Our neighbor, Steve Garrett drove thirteen miles to Grande Prairie to get the doctor — Steve's horses were played out when they reached town. The doctor hired an outfit and driver from the livery stable and came to deliver the baby. Grandma came and took care of Mother and the baby for nine days. That was the "Winter of the Deep Snow" which came on October 18th and stayed till mid-May.

Mum and Grandma were always very close. They missed each other greatly. Every week on mail day Mum mailed a letter to Grandma at our Glen Leslie Post Office and every week received one from Grandma. She says there was never a mail day without a letter. Just a month before Violet was born, Grandma's youngest son Earl was born. In their letters Mum and Grandma told each other about their babies and exchanged snapshots of them. Grandma kept all Mums letters in a trunk and, years later, I was allowed to read them. Perhaps as a result of this early correspondence, Mum is an interesting and faithful correspondent. I always answer her letters first — I know she'll write right back.

Dad started on the land the next spring on May 21st. The mosquitoes were vicious and had to be smudged out of the house before we went to bed at night. Smudges were built for the relief of the horses, too. The first crop was good but the price of grain went down drastically.

Grandpa continued to farm in Minnesota till the spring of 1921. Grandma and Grandpa came North then with sons Arthur (we called him Sonny), Jack, Charlie and Earl. It was crowded in that little log house. Mother, Dad, Violet and I slept in a granary till they finished building our big log house on our own land a quarter of a mile west.

Herbert and Herman were born there that fall in November. Mrs. Turner who lived two and a half miles north of us delivered them. Although she was not a doctor she was known as Dr. Turner in the community. She was more than a mid-wife, could give chloroform and was consulted frequently for various illnesses. Four years later Dr. Turner delivered our brother Bobby in the same house. Six years after that Mum went to the Grande Prairie Hospital to have our youngest brother, Ellsworth. While in the hospital she became ill with Scarlet Fever and was put in quarantine in a tiny one-room place behind the hospital. Grandma went in to look after her. When they left it had to be fumegated. The matron instructed Grandma to be sure to stuff the keyhole. This seemed ridiculus to Grandma who commented "You could have thrown a cat through the building any place."

Charlie and Jack attended school at Crystal Creek. When I was six I went with them. We walked the two and a half miles to school in spring and fall when the horses were being used on the land. Jack who was in Grade 8 by that time carried me whenever he thought I was getting tired. Miss Elsie Monkman taught eight grades and I listened in. Mum says that for the first three months when I came home from school she'd ask: "What did you learn today, Elaine?" and I'd answer "a, b, and c." Apparently I didn't count what I learned from listening in.



Grandma Ladwig (Kimble) with her three generation of twins. Standing: Sons, Herbert and Herman. Seated: Grandsons Rocky and Robin Kimble. On Grandma's knee, Darren and Dallas Kimble.

We had a school library of about forty books. As I learned to read I developed an insatiable appetite for books. When I look at the well-stocked school libraries of today I think how I would have appreciated such a library. Once, when I was eleven, Mum mentioned the boxes of the magazines she had brought with her from the states. I asked eagerly where they were and was devastated when she told me she had thrown them away years ago.

Occasionally a teacher would order a box of books from the travelling library in Edmonton — a tremendous treat! Butchart's Drugstore operated a lending library in Grande Prairie for a time where you could buy your first book for a dollar and exchange it for a dime. We joined it. When Earl Bates family came from South Saskatchewan in the late Twenties they brought quite a number of books. Helen Bates would bring a book to school for me every day and take home the one I'd finished at the end of the day. Grandpa said I read so much I was stupid and suggested that mum should stop me from reading at home. For a long time I didn't like him very much.

Grandma Leslie introduced mum to wild berry-picking and it is still her greatest pleasure in life. Wild strawberries were big and plentiful then, as were Saskatoons, Blueberries, Cranberries and Raspberries. In August we would go to a place on the Smoky River flats known as Brook Banks, by team and wagon, leaving home early in the morning. When we left the Blueberry patch at night the moon would be rising above the Smoky Valley through the pines. On one berry-picking excursion we went to the Wapiti River flats where our neighbours the Scotts were camping. That night we children slept in a row out under the stars — a delightful experience. I don't know where the mosquitoes had gone.

Grandpa bought a car which neither he nor Grandma learned to drive. Mum did, so she drove the car wherever she and Grandma wanted to go and, of course, "us kids" went along. Once they took us to Bear Lake for a picnic. As we came up over the hill, our Uncle Arthur's wife, Rosie, said we were going

right over into the lake. It did look as though we would and we were petrified.

It was a rare good life — we did not miss the luxuries we'd never known. The annual Christmas concert put on by the teacher and school children was the highlight of the year. There were softball games, dances, card parties and the annual picnics in June. The whole family attended all social functions. A circus came to Grande Prairie — perhaps a small affair but we were enchanted. I day-dreamed of being a trapeze-performer and we all practised on the rail corral by the barn.

In the Thirties, we had a wet year when the crops froze and a dry year when the dust blew — and the Depression; but always enough to eat and wear and a great good time through it all. World War II came. By this time I was married to Tom Osborne (he had left South Saskatchewan because of the drought there.) Violet was married to Alfred Wales. Herbert and Herman tried to join the Army but were rejected because they were too young. Herbert joined the next year when he was eighteen, went overseas and was in a supply truck on the way to the battle front when the truck went over a mine and exploded. That was the end of the war for Herbert — the next thing he knew, he was in a hospital in England. Injuries to his back and legs kept him in a cast for months and he was eventually sent home to Canada.

While he was gone Mum wrote him daily and mailed the letters weekly. Whenever any of us came in the house we would read what she had written to Herbert. After Herbert came home, he met and married Jean McLaughlin and has four boys including a set of twins. During the war Herman married Louise Robideau. They have two boys and three girls. Bob Married Louise's cousin, Stella Norton and raised three boys and a girl. Violet and Alfred have two boys and two girls. Ellsworth married Anne Bernie Brown and they have three boys and two girls. Tom and I have two boys and three girls. Besides mum's twins Herbert and Herman, she has twin grandsons and twin great-grandsons, all by the name of Kimble. Most of mum's grandchildren are married so she has many great-grandchildren.

Dad died in 1949. Two years later Mother married Rhinehart Ladwig, a neighbour whose wife had passed away, leaving him with three children around the age of my two oldest boys. Mum found herself raising another family — both a challenge and a joy. Later the Ladwig boys, Keith and Arnold took over the farm. Mother and Rhinehart bought a house in Grande Prairie, where Mother still lives. In 1969 Rhinehart passed away in his sleep — he had a heart attack previously but was feeling fine. He was a wonderful husband, father and grandfather. Many of Mother's children know only him as "Grandad" and loved him dearly.

Mother feels she has had such an enjoyable life and says she finds life as exciting now as when she came to Grande Prairie in 1919. She still has the good friend she made when she first came here. She and Jennie McDonald go on trips, berry-picking excursions and play a lot of scrabble together. All Mum's children and many of her grandchildren live at, or near, Grande Prairie with the exception of myself. I teach school in Sherwood Park (near Edmonton) so live in Sherwood Park.

For the past nine years Tom has been working a gold claim in British Columbia, thirty miles from the Yukon border and two time zones west of Grande Prairie.

KNIGHTS

Louis H. Knight was born in 1875 in England, and came to Canada at the age of sixteen years. He lived and farmed in Ontario, where he met and married Minerva Wright. They had a family of five children — Richie, Bessie, Nellie, Edith, and George.



Mr. Louis Knight in their flower garden.

In March, 1926, Louis came from Meaford, Ontario, and bought the Truman Manning property, S.W. 16-72-4-W. 6, which became the home place. He also bought section 9-72-4-W. 6. The family followed in June, 1926 — Mrs. Knight, two sons, and two daughters. Bessie stayed in Ontario with her husband, and their six children. Rich, too, was married, and he packed up his four children and headed west along with his mother. After riding on the train for five days and nights from Meaford, Ontario, they finally arrived in Grande Prairie. Louis and a neighbor packed up the weary bunch and out they came to the farm, to start a new life.

Fun times ahead — softball games on Sundays, horseshoe games, dancing at Crystal Creek Hall, Kleskun Hill School and the Club Hall. Granny Knight used to say, "If I saw a team of horses coming down the road in the winter time, I knew they were coming here, because the road was not open any further west than here." Many a cold night that George got out of



The Louis Knight home.

his warm bed and gave it to some traveller and found himself heading down the cold road to his sister's place to spend the night.

There was more to life than fun, though, the Depression, there was no money, of course, but there was the will and way to carry on. Also, in December, 1936 there was an addition to the family when George married Violet Brown. Then Granny got sick in 1941 and in 1943 she died. It was a terrible loss to the family. Louis died in June, 1965. There are two of the family still living in the Grande Prairie area — Bessie and George.



The Knight family and Fogle's threshing crew, 1926.

George and his prize-winning pigs — he won prizes at the fair for his pigs by swiping cream from the cold house that was meant to be butter, and feeding it to his pigs. He'd win a prize of $3.00 for a pig, ship his pig, then get a cheque for $1.80. This was payment for his pig, minus transportation.

George and Violet adopted two children — Allan and Bonnie. Allan and Bonnie went to Crystal Creek School until Allan was in Grade 6 and Bonnie in Grade 5. They were then bussed to the Grande Prairie Public



George Knight with the cup he won with his prize pig.

School by Lyle Kuykendall. This was a much better mode of transportation, than they were used to — riding horseback or walking. George had built the kids a closed in cutter with a little stove in it — to drive to school in the winter. Every morning the stove was fired up so that the cutter would be warm when Allan, age 7, and Bonnie, age 6, would hitch old Dobbin to the cutter and off they'd go to school. One morning, though, we looked out the window and saw that the cutter was getting much too warm — it went up in flames!

George drove a U.F.A. gas truck for a while and worked for C.C.I.L. George and Violet reside at the home place now, and are R.R. No. 1 mail couriers. Allan is married to Darlene Dool, has two children, lives in Sherwood Park, and works for the Provincial Government. Bonnie married Irvin Macklin, has five children and lives on a quarter of land, kitty-corner to her dad's place.

MIKE KOHOLYK — by Douglas Clarkson

Mike Koholyk filed on the N.W. 3-72-4 in 1916. After getting his land broken up, he rented it to the neighbors, but continued to make his home on it. He was well known for his ability to build a perfect row of bundle stacks and also he was a very good stooker. He and Allen Petty did a lot of work for the municipality and later the county. It is believed Mike was the last one to haul grain to town with oxen from this district. He passed away in 1954 after a short illness.

JOHN AND HELENA LEMKY AND FAMILY

The drought stricken fields at Rosthern, Saskatchewan could not compare to the luscious growth of the Peace River Country. In 1928 the lure of greener fields enticed John Lemky and family to move to Grande Prairie, Alberta, where he rented Tom Newton's farm for a few years. Later in 1928, he bought land in the Crystal Creek area, where he cleared, farmed, raised cattle, etc., for fifteen years.

He was a lover of horses — which he could break-in and handle easily. Eight horses abreast or tandem (four horses at the back and two horses up front) — would pull the plough for him without ever a mixup. John Lemky Sr. was a member of the Masonic Lodge. He passed away in 1944 at the age of sixty-eight.

Helena Lemky loved people and always looked at the cheerful side of things. Helena was a good homemaker. Could she sew! She didn't need a pattern. If we told her what we wanted her to sew, she could sew it, and she made it fit. Blouses and hats for the girls were made from flour sacks and shirt-tails, which had a little wear left in them. Helena passed away in 1954.

Five boys and four girls helped in the family farm, until they grew up. John, the eldest son, stayed on, but love and marriage claimed the rest.

John Lemky Jr. was born August 6, 1901 at Rosthern, Saskatchewan (then North West Territories). He had one year of college in Pennsylvania, U.S.A., and moved to Grande Prairie in 1928. He farmed in the Glen Leslie and Crystal Creek districts. He was active in three lodges — Masonic, Shrine, and Eastern Star. John passed away September 19, 1974. Interred in the Glen Leslie Cemetery.

Artie, the youngest, was 24 years old when he passed away in Crystal Creek, and was buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery alongside his mother and father.

Mary Lemky married Gene Gaboury. In 1928 they moved to Crystal Creek, where they farmed until they went homesteading in Fitzsimmons in 1930. At present they live in Goodwin. Their children are:

Billie — died at three months of age.

Sadie G. Gaboury married John Sarmaga. Sadie is a teacher-principal at Bezanson. John Sarmaga is farming north of Bezanson. Their children are:

Maxine Sarmaga, who married Dennis Maxwell. Both teach. They have two sons, Tommy and Rudy.

Donna Sarmaga, who married Louis Bedard. Donna is a steno in Grande Prairie and Louis is employed at P & G. They have one daughter, Michelle.

Grant Sarmaga — a construction contractor at Bella Coula.

Gene Sarmaga — works on the oil rigs.

Audrey Sarmaga — employed at P & G.

Albert M. Gaboury married Lucille Steeves. They farm, raise cattle, and take an active part in the Teepee Creek Stampede. Albert (Bud) is the Sr. half of Father and Son Duo, Rig Eight. Lucille is a meticulous housekeeper. They have two sons, Wayne and Douglas.

Wayne Gaboury married Barbara Johnston. They farm and Wayne is the Jr. half of Rig Ten. Barbara is a gifted seamstress. They have Michelle, Wade, and Nicole. They live in Fitzsimmons.

Douglas Gaboury married Jane Murphy. Doug and Jane farm. Doug also works at oil-well drilling. Jane worked as a telephone operator. They have Connie, Tammy, and Kimberley. They live in Tranquility.

Lawrence J. Gaboury married Faye Coney. They farm just east of the Smoky River, as well as doing construction work. Faye sews, curls, and rides horses. Their three children are:

Carrie, married to Brian McQuaig. They live in Grande Prairie, where both have office jobs.

James, who married Diane Carragher. Both are employed.

Janet Lee, who is continuing her education.

Alice Gaboury married Buster Jennings. Alice is a nursing aid and Buster is a salesman. They live in Edmonton. Their children are: Marllys, Monte, Melody, and Roxanne.

Anna Lemky married Oscar L. Mackey of Teepee Creek, where they still live on his homestead. Oscar still farms and does his own electrical and mechanical work. Anna retired from teaching after having spent twenty-nine years in the classroom. They have two children — Avis and Gordon.

Avis L. Mackey married John D. Riva, and both teach in Calgary. They have one daughter, Valery Nicole.

Gordon E. Mackey married Alice Broad. Both are teachers. They farm, and enjoy curling. They have three sons: Glen Edwin, John Robert, and Duncan Scott. They live in Grande Prairie.

Edward Lemky married Emma Toews. At first they lived on the Shortreed Homestead in Crystal Creek, and later they moved to the Leslie Homestead. They have three children: Wilfred, Loraine, and Lavinia.

Lawrence Wilfred Lemky married Margaret Reimer. They live and farm in Crooked Creek. They have six children: Joyce, Byron, Steven, Vivian, Jonathon, and Delphine.

Loraine Winifred Lemky married John Carbury. They live in Coeur D'Lane, U.S.A. Loraine won trophies and prizes for target shooting, and is artistically gifted. John, an avid reader, is very competent in his occupation, record keeper. They have three children: Edward, Norman, and Valerie.

Lavinia Vivian Lemky married Kenneth Scott of Clarkson Valley, where they live, farm, and are musicians and artists. They have three children: Naomi, Janina and Darrel.

Wilfred and Loraine attended Crystal Creek School, where Miss Irma Oatway was the teacher. Wilfred and Lorraine walked three miles to school, through the Marcy's herd. When the children slept in, Uncle Herb would hook up the horses, Dick and Ginger, and hurry them off to school on time.

Ed opened up a service station, "Lemky's Service" in Grande Prairie in 1946, and ran it for ten years. Wilf, Loraine and Lavinia attended school in Grande Prairie at that time.

Walter took a barber course and barbered for twenty-four years, until his legs gave out and he retired. Maude retired from teaching. Walt and Maude now live in Red Deer.

Eva Lemky married Arthur B. Patterson. They

lived in Glen Leslie, where Art has experimental fruit trees, writes poetry, and is still farming. Eva was a nursing attendant in the Auxiliary Hospital in Grande Prairie for thirteen years, until her early retirement in 1976. They have three children and Gregory, who was born 1957 and died 1957.

Everett Russell Patterson married Joan Head. Their daughters are Donna and Linda. They live at Fort St. John, where Joan pilots Wide Loads, and Everett is in the trucking business.

Roger Lee Patterson married Margaret (Cookie) Nelson. They have three sons: Tommy and Kevin (twins) and Michael. Cookie works at the school library. Roger works for Allied Farm Equipment. They now live in Winnipeg.

Diane Yvette Patterson is married to John Blackwell, who at present is an automotive parts salesman in Regina, Saskatchewan, where Diane is completing her course in Lab-Technology-Research at the University.

Ed and Walt, the musicians of the family, enjoyed playing their violins for dances. Herb joined them with his ukelele.

Herbert and Tena attended Crystal Creek School under the grateful guidance of Gertrude Rhumor Clarkson.

Herbert Lemky married Emily Hackwell and farmed in the Crystal Creek District from 1941-1967. They now farm at Debolt. Their children are:

Sheral Caroline Lemky, who married Herbert Wales. They have two girls Cindy and Camas. In previous years Sheral was secretary for Imperial Oil in Grande Prairie, and Herbert farms, ranches, and does construction work. They live in Glen Leslie.

Chesley Carson Lemky is an Automotive parts salesman, at present working in Calgary.

Ellery Code John Lemky married Patricia Turner, a lab technician. Ellery is taking his apprenticeship in plumbing in Grande Prairie.

Katherine (Tena) Lemky was married to Cyril Frank Binks. They farmed and Cyril started a lumber-sawing business. Cyril and his crew had cut a million board feet of lumber before Christmas of 1955. He was hit by a limb, which caused his death. Their children: Robert, Dennis and Phyllis.

Robert Frank Binks married Doreen Rycroft. They farm and raise cattle, and do cat work. Robert and Doreen are the parents of five sons, Kenneth, Raymond, Bradley, Evan and Trevor. Robert took over his dad's farm.

Dennis Laverne Binks married Cheryl Foster. They farm, but took on other employment as well. Dennis is employed by Archie Hackwell as shopforeman and repairman of Industrial Equipment. Cheryl is secretary-saleslady at Lampland at present. They have Chrissy, Russell, and Darren. They live at Eldoe's Trailer Park in Grande Prairie.

Phyllis Katherine Binks married Charles Foster, who is a barber and a trucker. Phyllis spent considerable time working in the Bank. They have two daughters, Anne and Deanna. They live in the Pine Valley subdivision, Grande Prairie.

In 1961, Tena was married to John Henry Morency, who was a steam-engineer at the Plywoods Factory in Grande Prairie, where they lived until his death in 1965.

In 1970 Tena was married to Lawrence Joe O'Toole, who is a dryer grader operator at the North Canadian Plywood Division in Grande Prairie. Tena is a member of the Royal Purple and a member of the Eastern Star, and is still actively employed by the Hospital as a nursing attendant. They live in Grande Prairie.

THE MANNINGS

Truman and Hubert Manning, originally from Meaford, Ontario, left Davidson, Saskatchewan in March, 1911, by train for Edmonton. There they purchased a small team of horses and democrat. After purchasing their supplies, they left for the Peace River District, via Athabasca Landing, Mirror Landing, Sawridge, Grouard, Peace River Crossing, Dunvegan, Spirit River, and Bear Creek Crossing. Here there was a population of seven, living in three houses. It is now known as Grande Prairie City and has a population of over seventeen thousand in 1976.



The Hubert Manning home, 1976.

After selecting their land in the Kleskun Hill district, they returned to Grouard and filed their claims, and picked up their freight, which was shipped by boat from Athabasca Landing. They returned to Kleskun Hill and had the first Kleskun Hill Post Office, which is now R.R. No. 1, Grande Prairie. They plowed two furrows from Dead Horse Creek (now called Crystal Creek) to the Smoky River. This is now No. 34 Highway. Hubert helped install the first ferry at Goodwin Crossing (earlier called Smoky Crossing). He also set an owl on four hen eggs and hatched four baby chicks.

Truman disposed of his land in 1926. Hubert, in 1976, still owns his original homestead.

OSRO MARCY

In July, 1919 Osro Marcy along with his wife Lena and two sons, Don and Ted arrived in Grande Prairie. Osro and his wife were born in Iowa, homesteaded in South Dakota, and after retiring from farming in Wendom, Minnesota decided at ages of sixty-four to bring Don and Ted and try ranching in Canada.

They bought the Crowe homestead S.W. of 28-71-4 through which Crystal Creek runs, also two adjoining quarters from a man named Davidson. I do not know where Mr. Davidson went to.

In Edmonton, on the way up to Grande Prairie, they bought cows at one hundred dollars per head; shortly after the price dropped very low and it was many years before they could figure they had regained the first investment.

Osro and Lena used to spend some winters in California, returning in the spring. Eventually they built a home at Hawthorne, California (a suburb of Los Angeles) and retired there permanently, after selling the Davidson land to John Lemky. Ted went with them. They had a tree of each kind of fruit in their yard at Hawthorne, but still longed for the good butter, cream, and buttermilk they had had on the farm. Osro



Mr. and Mrs. Osro Marcy ready to leave for California, 1928. Miles Marcy on the running board.

died in 1939, but his wife had predeceased him in 1933. Ted died about fifteen years ago.

I married Don Marcy on December 7, 1921. That must have been a nice winter up until that time anyway, as after being married in Grande Prairie we drove home with a horse and buggy. I did get a little cold, but there was no snow on the ground.

We lived on the Crowe place in a granary-like house. The only refrigerator we had in those days was a hole dug on the north side of the house. We milked three cows and made butter for a living. One night I was awakened by the sound of the lid being lifted and let fall again. The first thing I thought of was a bear and I was frozen with fright, I guess, as it took me awhile to waken Don. When he went to look the butter box full of butter was lifted out and the piece of meat that was under it was gone. The bear must still have been nearby — I was still frightened the next day, so Don got the Andress brothers to bring their guns and we "lay in wait" all the next night, but no bear appeared.

Later on Don bought the Nicholas Andress homestead, the N.W. of 28-71-4. This we farmed, along with the homestead and the Crowe place on which we lived. We had three children; Miles, Lyall and Joyce. Lyall still farms this land. Miles was born in 1922, Lyall in 1927, Joyce in 1932.

Our children had nearly three miles to go to school, mostly on a north and south road on which no one lived.



Mr. and Mrs. Don Marcy.

They rode horseback, or drove a horse and sleigh. We used to heat rocks to put in the sleigh along with homemade wool quilts. In the first winters before any of the children went to school many times we were isolated — the only way out being on horseback. I call that pioneering, as money was very scarce, too.

We used to celebrate Christmas and New Years with my brother Fred and his family. One year at their home and one year at our home. We used to heat rocks and put them in the grain tank along with straw and blankets and crawl in — all except the driver.

One Christmas I well remember — Fred's were to be at our home for Christmas, but oh, it was so cold, fifty or sixty below and we really thought it was impossible for them to come, but kept hoping. Two o'clock passed and it seemed no hope could be held out, but I heard the dogs bark and on looking out they were driving in by the garden in the covered caboose. "What joy!" Fred said Faye had cried all morning so they just had to come. We especially enjoyed that Christmas!

In 1947 Don passed away at the early age of fifty and left me with a very empty place in my heart. In 1952, I married Tom Hillman. He is a senior citizen of Alberta (1905 to 1955). He has a framed "Golden Jubilee Senior Citizen Award" of which we are very proud. He came from Ontario to Red Deer with his parents in 1902 when Alberta was still the North West Territories. Later, his father homesteaded in the Stettler area.

Tom and I lived north-east of Edmonton for awhile — then bought a garage and service station at Spirit River. We also ran the B.A. Bulk Station. Our hours were from 7 A.M. to 12 P.M., so after eight and a half years of this, my husband's health forced us to an ear-

ly retirement. We keep busy though, by having a big garden with strawberries, raspberries, and apples. We also have a holiday trailer which we take to the woods in the summer. This we really love as we are close to the ducks, geese, and all kinds of birds, and the sound of the coyotes howl is music to our ears. Occasionally a bear is around too, as last summer one used to visit our place, but only when we were away. I also wondered why I had to wash the trailer windows so much, but on close examination I saw where he had put his paws up on the trailer and his nose against the window panes. — Thrilling! I must have gotten a heap more courage than I had on my first visit from a bear.

Getting back to my children — Miles married Marion Ward from Sexsmith in 1946. Five children were born to them. Kenneth, Marilynne, Gregory, Kevin, and Colleen. Miles is in construction at Grande Prairie.

Joyce married Kenneth Parks from Rycroft in 1951. They had four children. Rodney, Trudy, Clifford, and Janet. For many years they had an oilfield business at Rainbow Lake, Alberta, 370 miles from Grande Prairie. Joyce used to haul supplies by herself to their camp at Rainbow — now they own and operate a business of their own at Grande Prairie.

Tom and I are happy to be together in our own home and spent much of our winters looking forward, not to a trip to Hawaii or the Caribbean, but to the time we can take our holiday trailer and return to the woods.

LYALL MARCY

Lyall Marcy was born October 17, 1927, at the Grande Prairie Hospital and grew up on the family farm in the Crystal Creek district. He attended the Crystal Creek School and then helped his father with the farming.

When his father became ill, he found himself more and more interested in farming the home place. When his father passed away on October 7, 1947, he and his mother continued on the farm while his sister Joyce carried on with her schooling. She went to high school and Business College in Grande Prairie.

On April 17, 1951, Lyall married Mary Funnell, daughter of a 1912 Halcourt pioneer, Thomas E. Funnell. Mrs. T. E. Funnell, nee Ethel Bastin, was a District Nurse in the Halcourt area when they were married on July 15, 1926. Her nursing ability was in constant demand during the years, either to homes or hospitals in the area.

On December 27, 1952, Lyall's mother remarried. Her husband, Thomas Hillman was a farmer at Rife, near Glendon.

Lyall and his wife, Mary, have continued on the farm in the Crystal Creek district. Their family of five children, one girl and four boys, have been a real help to their parents.

The oldest are twins, Dianne and Dana, born June 20, 1954 (a Father's Day surprise), Phillip, born December 9, 1956, Wayne, born June 19, 1959, and Raymond, born October 16, 1963. Dianne has worked at Proctor and Gamble for over three years. Dana is employed at the A. L.C.B. at Grande Prairie. Phillip, also employed at Proctor and Gamble, is married to Jo-Ann Corry, and they have one son, Richard. Wayne and Raymond are still in school. All the children were bussed to Harry Balfour and the Composite High School in Grande Prairie.

Over the years the family have gone into the cow-calf business of farming, so grain-growing, hay and pasture have become an important part of the farming picture.

Lyall is an active member of the community, serving a term as President of the Crystal Creek Community Hall Board, is a member of the Grande Prairie B.P.O.E., and also is involved with the Grande Prairie County Agriculture Society. Earlier he was trouble-shooter for the local telephone company, until the line was put underground.

Mary found herself involved with Home and School, Community Club, 4-H and 4-H District Council, and Royal Purple. All the children have been members of the Grande Prairie 4-H Beef Club. Raymond is still a member. Dana also won the I. V. Macklin public speaking trophy during her years in the club.

PAT McCANN — by Douglas Clarkson

Pat McCann filed on the S.E. 4-72-4-W6 in 1913. Pat came from Ireland and was well blessed with Irish wit and humor. He was a friend to everyone. Before coming to this area, he had worked in a mine in the western United States, where he was continually asking the cook to make mulligan. This led to him being nick-named Jim Mulligan, and he was known by this name for several years, but managed to shake it after he came here. When he got comfortably settled here, he induced a girlfriend in Ireland to come to Canada to share his joys and sorrows. This she did, but on the trip over, she became ill. Pat, as arranged, went to Edmonton to meet her, but sorry to say, he went to a funeral instead of a wedding.

Pat worked as a ferry man on the Smoky River. Some say he was the first man to operate it, but the records are not clear on this point. He was the last to operate the ferry at the crossing at the site of original Bezanson. In 1919, he sold his homestead and farming equipment to Germund Grundforsen. After he gave up the ferry job, he took up land north of the Goodwin Corner, where he raised cattle and horses. He would break the monotony of lonely life on the ranch by an occasional extended visit to Grande Prairie. On these occasions, he got his meals at a small restaurant operated by a fine lady, who got the impression that he was neglecting his family by his extended visits to Grande Prairie, and would urge him to return home. He would assure her that they would be all right. Finally she told him, "If I were your wife, I would give you poison." Pat calmly replied, "If I was your husband, I would take poison."

Pat was found dead in his cabin on the ranch. It is believed he became ill, and being alone and unable to care for himself, and it being winter, he died of exposure in his own home.

WILLIAM (BILL) AND JOHN (JOCK) McDONALD — by Jennie McDonald.

William and John McDonald were of a family of eight born to Donald and Jane McDonald of Langside, Ontario. In their early twenties they came to Manitoba



Mr. and Mrs. Jack McDonald on their Golden Wedding.

on a harvest excursion to help with the harvesting. What they saw, they liked and the next year, 1910 ventured farther west, working for a while at carpentry in Saskatchewan.

There they heard of the Peace River country and journeyed on to Edson, working there for the winter, Bill hauling cord wood and Jock working in the round house for the railway.

According to Bill's diary they left Edson for Grande Prairie on August 16, 1911 accompanied by Tommy Warden and two other young fellows whose names are not mentioned. They had one pack horse to carry their provisions and for the most part, slept under the stars. It was on the Edson Trail that the brothers got their nicknames which stayed with them the rest of their lives.

The diary also mentions a rabbit was shot for dinner or a few prairie chickens. At Sturgeon Lake they got some fish from the Indians which was quite a treat. They arrived in Grande Prairie on August 27th and the next few days was spent looking for land. On September 2nd, 1911 Bill filed on the N.W. 32-71-4-W6. Jock took the N.E. 32-71-4 and the following day they left for Edson where they worked until spring when they returned to their homesteads and built their first log buildings.

Bill farmed until he sold out to Mr. Will Rigler in 1927 and returned to Ontario where he lived until his death in 1974.

In 1921 Jock started putting up buildings on his own quarter and the next summer, a new house was built. This started many rumors which proved true for on December 20, 1922 he took as his bride, Jennie Clarkson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Clarkson who had moved into the district from Chilliwack, B.C. in 1919.

Many happy years were spent together on the farm. It was not always sunshine, we had our ups and downs, our joys and sorrows as most everyone does. We enjoyed good neighbors and many a good card game in the winter evenings.

Our farm grew to a section of land and in the meantime, our family also grew to include two sons and two daughters. Lena married Jack Moon but ill health



Brenda McDonald, City Queen, 1973.



Barbara McDonald, Carnival Queen, 1973.

came her way and she passed away in 1958. Donald married Nancy Hutt and they have four children. Bruce married Helen Bakkehaug and have a family of five. Margaret married Keith Ladwig and have two children.

When the boys married they took over the farm and we moved into Grande Prairie to make a new home. In 1972 we were honored to celebrate our Golden Wedding Anniversary with our family and friends. In poor health for many years, Jock passed away on February 19, 1973.

I enjoy my home and flowers, family and friends and live on with my memories.

TAKEN FROM THE DIARY OF WILLIAM McDONALD ON THE EDSON TRAIL — by Douglas Clarkson

In August of 1911, four young men bought a pack horse in Edson, packed their blankets and grub, with some tin plates and cups, a couple of pots to boil their tea and prairie chickens and a frying pan, and headed up the Trail to Grande Prairie. In the party were Bill and Jock McDonald, Tommy Warden, and another fellow who did not like what he saw of Grande Prairie and soon walked over the Trail again to Edson. Fortunately, Bill wrote a bit daily in his little notebook and this is what he wrote:

Left Edson August 16, got out about 7 miles for dinner and the Frenchman's for supper and made about 1½ miles on the other side of the Frenchman's for night. Left next morning, August 17, at half past seven and made the Scotchman's about five o'clock and had supper, than started about half past six and went about five miles and camped for the night. Got up on the morning of August 18, and started at five o'clock and went about three miles and camped for breakfast. Left there at 8 o'clock and made about nine miles and had dinner and stayed about two hours. Started about two o'clock and got to the Athabasca about three o'clock and had supper, left there about half past four and went six miles to the Baptiste River Crossing and got there at half past six and went about a mile and a half further and camped for the night on August 18. On the 19 we left about seven-twenty and made about eight miles before dinner and got to the Little Smoky for supper and got two chickens on the way.

We left on Sunday the 20th at half past ten and went about six miles and had dinner on rabbit, tea, bread and butter and started off at half past three and got a mile and a half past the Tony River and camped for the night and had prairie chicken for supper. Left there next morning, on August 21st and made about fifteen miles and camped for dinner. Left at twenty minutes after one and made about twelve miles and camped for the night. Started August 22nd and made 12 miles and camped for dinner and started at two o'clock and made nine miles and camped at Moose River for the night and got five chickens. Left August 23rd and travelled twelve miles and camped for dinner. Started at a quarter after two to get to Sturgeon Lake and camped for the night. Got some fish from the Indians and got provisions for the journey. Left August 24th at 8 o'clock and made about twelve miles and camped for the night. It rained, thundered with lightning most of the night. August 25th made ten miles and camped for dinner. Started at half past one and made the Big Smoky at six. Went across and swam the horse across and camped for the night. Got a little wet but got dried before we went to bed.

August 26th left two miles from Big Smoky and got five miles from Grande Prairie City and got five chickens and camped for the night. August 27th, Sunday, didn't leave till a quarter after one. Went up to Axon's and saw his garden and it looked fine. Saw a wolf and had dinner at half past twelve on three chickens, bread, potatoes, and soup. Left there at a quarter after one and got into Grande Prairie City a quarter after three and camped on the bank of the river. Started to rain at four. Had supper at Breeden's. August 28th got up and had breakfast and went up to the Land Office and got our plots. Waited until after dinner and started out. Got about eight or nine miles out and camped for the night. Got up and started out early and got to Keith's for noon. Had dinner and got him to drive us around. We came down by Cutbank Lake and Bear Lake to Atkinson's and camped for the night. Left there next morning, 29th of August and went in through Township 74, Range 8 and got back to Atkinson's at three and started for Saskatoon Lake, got there at eight and camped for the night. Next morning, August 30th, got back to Grande Prairie City at four and camped for the night. August 31st got George Diller and started out east through T. 71, R. 4 and 5. Came back September 2nd and filed. Left on September 3rd for Edson.

DONALD McDOUGAL — by Douglas Clarkson

Donald McDougal filed on the N.E. 7-72-4 in 1912. He was quite progressive and added three more quarters to his holdings. He dearly loved to argue his political views with anyone who did not see things his way. He was also quite confident of his ability to locate water. He spent many hours witching for water for his neighbors, and in some cases was successful.



The Donald McDougal house and barn, 1976.

He built a small well-constructed house on his homestead, which is still standing today. It was still used until some time in the 1960's and never required a heater. In 1928 he sold his homestead to Mr. Salmark

and moved to Grande Prairie, where he resided for several years before passing away.

THE McFETRIDGES

Thomas, Minnie and daughter, Marie, sailed from Liverpool, England, on March 17, 1926 and arrived in Edmonton, Alberta on Good Friday, April of 1926. They had to wait in Edmonton until after the Easter holidays and then continued to Grande Prairie where they settled in the Crystal Creek area on the N.W.¼ of Sec. 4-72-4-6.

After owning and operating a hotel business in England, farming was quite an experience for the family. In 1927, their son, Jack, was born and when school age, both children attended the Crystal Creek School where grades one to nine were taught.

Until rural route mail delivery came into effect, a weekly seven mile trip was made to the Glen Leslie General store to pick up the mail and groceries. After spending fifteen years on the farm, they sold their holdings — and moved to Grande Prairie where Tom worked at the airport until 1966 until retirement. In the spring of 1967 they moved to Victoria, B.C. and that same fall, Minnie passed away suddenly at the age of 68 years. Tom continues to reside at Victoria.

THOMAS McMILLAN — by Douglas Clarkson

Thomas McMillan homesteaded the N.W. 21-71-4 in 1917. No record remains of his activities as a homesteader, or his residence here, but it is known that he later went to South Africa and became prominent and wealthy in the diamond business.

JACK MOLENAAR

As a newcomer to the district, I left Holland in the spring of 1951 and arrived by boat at Quebec. After being three to four days on a train, I arrived at Edmonton. At my stay at the immigration hall, I met a young fellow who asked me if I was interested to work on a farm. I gladly accepted and took a farm job near Wetaskiwin. This lasted for 1½ years, and I enjoyed it thoroughly. One job I could remember well was harnessing horses. The first time I did this, I was unable to harness them.

The following four years I spent in Regina on a farm during the summer and the winter job was in a bush near Whitecourt. Remembered well, we stopped near south Regina on a Saturday afternoon at a farmer's place, Mr. Clell Thompson, and asked for a job, but he would not hire us because we looked like bums. Two years later, Mr. Thomas hired me and I worked for him for two summers. This was one of the best places that I ever worked.

The first winter we went to the bush, in the fall of 1953, and got a job with Roy Dedrich in a sawmill. Our language was still poor; the boys at the camp sure had lots of fun with us. One evening, the boys came to our bunkhouse and stoked our fire up and left. Soon afterwards, the bunkhouse was filled with smoke because they had plugged the stovepipe outside.

My wife to be, Rita Bos, arrived in Canada in 1953, and worked at odd jobs. We got married in the spring of 1957. After we got married, our job was at Hinton and Northwest Pulp. The job did not last long. We and brother Pete came to Grande Prairie in August, 1957, where we got a farm job with Stan Moore. We took some of his crop off, but due to a wet fall, some crops were left out. That winter, I did his chores.

Our first child, Ria, was born in the spring of 1958. Brother Pete and I bought Ken Patterson's place and farmed together for two years. I sold my share and went working for Douglas Clarkson. Douglas agreed if we could buy a farm, I would leave him, but this never happened.

Our second child, Peter, was born in the spring of 1961. The same fall we bought Clarkson's home place. Spring of 1964, our third child Diana was born and in the winter of 1966, our youngest, Dick, was born.

We visited Holland a couple of times, and we're always happy to be back in Canada!

NERSTADS

The Nerstads had moved from Galahad, Alberta in 1920. They later moved to LaGlace and farmed. There were three children; Bessie, Dorothy and Hubert. Bessie went to school in LaGlace until they moved to the Grande Prairie area.

Bessie and Dorothy attended Flying Shot School and also North Kleskun for a short time. They later rented George Ritchie's land. Bessie and Dorothy went to Crystal Creek School then. Dorothy and Hubert also went to Twilight School for a short while.

In 1930, Bessie married George Ritchie and moved to a homestead south of Crystal Creek. They had six children; Billy, Helen, Bob, Dorothy, Christina and Benjamin. After George passed away, Bessie moved to Edmonton and married Norman Lindsay.

FORD (STEVE) PARKER — by Douglas Clarkson

Ford Parker was born in Texas and spent his early years working on ranches in the northwestern United States. He located his homestead in the Crystal Creek district in 1911. He was always known as Steve to his many friends. He was a very good horseman. He worked for Taft driving stage on the Edson Trail and is known to have been the driver of the stage that brought the first banker (Mr. Bill Innes) to Grande Prairie. Although handicapped with very poor eyesight, Steve managed as well or better than some people with good eyesight. Everyone was always welcome at Steve's place.

Steve had one son, Melbourne, who is now farming northwest of Spirit River. In 1952, Steve sold his homestead to James Clarkson and retired to the west coast, where he passed away a few years afterward.

ALLEN PETTY — by Douglas Clarkson

Allen Petty is known to have come to the country with the Andress family. He filed on the N.E. 27-71-4 but later purchased, and lived on, Ellwood Spinney's homestead. He did considerable trapping and worked for many farmers around the district. He was highly regarded as a dependable employee. He and Mike Kochalyk installed most of the concrete culverts that were used in district roads. Al's ability to play the violin and guitar, as well as his ability to step dance, made him a popular man at many gatherings. His colorful expressions and language may have been a bit shocking to the more sophisticated but they were the cause of much merriment at many gatherings. He had

the strange characteristic that a picture taken of him would not develop properly, so no one has a picture of him. He passed away in 1954.

WILLIAM AND ETHEL RIGLER

William and Ethel Rigler arrived in Grande Prairie by rail the fall of 1927. They came from Regina and settled on the W½ 32-71-4-W6, in the Crystal Creek Community. Viola, their daughter, married just before they left Regina. Merlin, Ethel, Violet (Ted), Alvin, Albert, Percy, and Ray came with them. Ray, the youngest of the family, was seven years old when they moved.



Mrs. William Rigler with son Murland and his wife Vera.

The house was constructed from lumber, and heated by wood or coal. Kerosene or coal oil lights were used. A well was the main source of water.

William and the boys used horses and axes to clear the land. Farming was done by horses and tractor. Ethel, William and family used horses and wagon or cutter, or a car (an Overland) for transportation.

Mixed grains were grown as well as a mixed vegetable garden. Cows, pigs and chickens were also raised for meat, milk, butter, and eggs.

CHILDREN AND RESIDENCES:

Viola married George Mitchell and they settled in Regina. They had one daughter.

Merlin and wife Vera chose Grande Prairie to make their home. They have twelve children. Merlin ran M & M Service for a number of years.

Ethel and Gordon May settled in Victoria, B.C. They have five children. Ethel has since remarried to Watson Dougan. They now reside at Qualicum Beach, B.C.

Alvin and wife Mina resided in Grande Prairie, before moving to Victoria, B.C. They have three children.

Albert and Betty also reside in Victoria. They have three children.

Ted (Violet) married George Nelms. They now reside at 100 Mile House, B.C. They had four children, but only three are still living.

Percy and Elsie live on the farm. They have seven children.

Ray, who remains single, resides in Grande Prairie.

William and Ethel retired to Grande Prairie in 1946, then later moved to Victoria. They were predeceased by their daughter, Viola.

William passed away in the 1950's. Ethel and son Merlin passed away in the 1960's.

The farm was taken over by son, Percy, in 1946. He and his wife Elsie, (nee Evans of Five Mile Creek) still reside there. They have seven children:

Beverly and Stanley have two children and reside in the Pushwaskau Community, north of Debolt.

Wilfred and Jeanne and their two children have settled in the Crystal Creek area.

Gary and Marge and their three children live in Grande Prairie, as do Marvin and his wife, Ethel.

Ernie, Phillip, and Cherrie-Lynn are single and still reside on the farm.

Electricity has replaced the coal oil and kerosene lanterns, and an oil furnace takes the place of the coal and wood stoves. The water source is still a well, although an electric pressure system replaces the hand model and pumps the water automatically to the house and barn.

WILLIAM GEORGE RITCHIE

In the early 1900's, William George Ritchie, "Scotty", as he was known to many, came to Canada from Scotland. He was born at Peterhead, Aberdeenshire. In his travels he went over the Edson Trail to Grande Prairie, and homesteaded at Glen Leslie, Alberta. He ran a stopping place at the Little Smoky, east of Grande Prairie.

When the first great war broke out, he went to Edmonton and joined the Loyal Edmonton Regiment and served overseas for four years.

He married in England and returned to Grande Prairie and lived for years on a Solider Settlement Board quarter, six miles east and two and a half miles north of Grande Prairie.

In 1930 he married Bessie Nerstad, and moved to a homestead south of Crystal Creek. There were six children born to them; Billy, Helen, Bob, Dorothy, Christina, and Benjamin. Bill passed away in March, 1941, and was laid to rest in the Glen Leslie cemetery.

Helen married Len Scorgie and lives at Hinton Trail.

Bob married Ruth Schmidt and lives in Brooks, Alberta.

Dorothy married Marshall Semenchuk and lives at Vermillion.

Christina married James Novak and lives in Edmonton.

Benjamin is married and lives in Edmonton.

There are nine grandchildren.

George died in May, 1964 and was buried beside his son in the Glen Leslie cemetery. His widow married Norman Lindsay, an old time resident of Roblin, Manitoba. They now reside in Edmonton.

BILL AND CORENE RUTBERG FAMILY — by Corene Rutberg, February, 1977

Bill was born in Vulcan, Alberta, son of Chris and Anna Rutberg of Narvick, Norway. They moved to

Huallen District about 1930. My parents are Fred and Fay Boyd — old-timers of the Crystal Creek district.

Bill had his schooling at Mountain Trail School near Beaverlodge — he also attended school at N.A.I.T. in Edmonton and S.A.I.T. in Calgary, where he got his welder and mechanic license. He is now employed with L.I. Adam Contractors, as a crane operator.

I attended school at Crystal Creek, which only went to grade 9, so that was the limit of my education.

Bill and I were married July 27, 1949. We lived in Grande Prairie for 12 years, and in 1961 moved to an acreage on Dad's home quarter.

We were blessed with 4 children, 3 boys and 1 girl. Our oldest boy Gary, who was born in 1950, married Joanne Dorschied in June, 1970. She is the daughter of Vee and the late Earl Dorschied, of the Glen Leslie district. Gary and Joanne had 2 children. Darren now is 6 and Jamie Rae, our only granddaughter now 3. Gary lost his life in a tragic accident at Proctor and Gamble in March of 1974.

Our second son, Dennis Wayne was born February, 1951. He married Carol Ann Schnell, daughter of Ernie and Dora Schnell, now of Kelowna, B.C. Dennis and Carol have 2 boys, Wayne Devon, now 3, and Randy Rae now 2. Dennis is employed as a welder for Proctor and Gamble Woodlands Division.

Our third son Rod Albert — born January, 1953 is married to Debbie, daughter of Derek and Grace Taylor of Grande Prairie. They have 1 son, Carey Richard who is 2. Rod is a grader operator for Proctor and Gamble.

Our daughter Judy Lorraine was born June, 1955. She is married to Gary Dion, son of Donat and Ann Dion of Ft. St. John, B.C. They have 1 son, Maury Dallas who is 9 months old. Gary is employed with Proctor and Gamble in the mill. Judy is a hair stylist at Camille Beauty Salon in Grande Prairie.

Our children had their early schooling at Montrose school in Grande Prairie and later at Harry Balfour school and on to the Composite High School.

ROGER SAHLMARK

Roger Ludwig Sahlmark was born in Saskatchewan in July, 1886, and went to college and three years of university there. After teaching school for several years he started farming. In 1927 he decided to come west. He filed on land in the Valleyview district. The south part of the town is now situated on one of his quarters.

Deciding against settling there he moved to the old McDougal farm, quite often known as the Sahlmark hill by passers-by.

In 1929 he brought his three boys from Regina. The depression was a very trying time for everyone and in 1923 the boys, as well as himself came down with pleurisy pneumonia. Roger was not hospitalized, but the boys were, two having lungs tapped and remaining in the hospital for five and a half months. Money was hard to come by so the hospital bill was paid with potatoes.

Earlier years, Roger's home became a stopping place for many Crooked Creek and Clarkson Valley residents. They would leave home one day, stop over at Roger's, go to town the next day, returning that evening, stayed overnight again and returning home the next morning. No one was ever charged one cent. Roger's motto was "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

He relates a tragic story of his life. While still in Saskatchewan the two older boys, just little ones, started playing with matches. One day while out in the field Roger saw his newly built barn on fire. Unhooking one horse, he rode to the scene and after a hurried investigation found the boys missing. Roger decided to go in the fire and try and save them, and only through the frantic efforts of Mrs. Sahlmark and the big strong hired man was he detained.

The boys had gone behind a bluff, followed a fence line to another bush and, afraid of what they had done, hid there. However, when meal time came, the boys came home, much to the joy of everyone. All that ends well turned out not to be so good, as Roger became a serious epileptic after this scare.

It seemed the H was a floating letter in the name Sahlmark. People knew there was an H in it, but where to put it? It seemed to end up anywhere from the beginning to the end of the name, so after much confusion at the Post Office, the letter H was dropped and he became known as Salmark.

Sahlmark is a Swedish name, and I later found that Roger could speak the language very fluently.

Roger served on the Crystal Creek school board a number of years, and was also a firm believer in the Truth. He was happiest when discussing the Lord and loved poetry. To him, money was of no interest in comparison. He passed away from a sudden illness with cancer in 1950 and awaits the Resurrection Day.

GUY STUART SCOTT — by the family

G. S. Scott, born in Clinton, Ontario in 1886, moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, with his parents when he was a young child. He grew up there and upon finishing school served a four year apprenticeship as a railroad machinist at the "Zoo Line" shops.

After working for several railroads in U.S. and Canada, he decided he wanted to get away from machinery, so upon hearing of homesteads and South African Scripe being available in the Peace River District, he decided to try his hand at that.

Leaving Edmonton in 1912 on foot with a small gun, he started for Grande Prairie via what was known as the Edson Trail. His plans were to buy food at the stopping places, but on some of the trips he made up and back over the next two years, he couldn't always buy a meal. There were times they were so short they had to hold it for the stage, which was carrying the mail, and any passengers that might be along.

On one occasion, the cook had just finished some baking powder biscuits and he wanted to buy half a dozen but the cook said, "I can't sell them to you", but then added, "there is nothing to stop me from giving you some." So he put a few in a bag and gave to him. When he couldn't buy a meal, he shot red squirrel and cooked them over the campfire on a stick, so the few biscuits made quite fair dining.

After filing on his homestead N.W. 34-71-4-W. 6 and scrip N.½ 4-72-4-W. 6, in what is known as Crystal Creek, he returned to South Edmonton to work for the

railroad during the winter. (The area known as Strathcona in those days.) He came back to Grande Prairie for the summer and fall, clearing land and breaking it with a team of bulls (oxen), building a cabin, which contained a sod roof and dirt floor, but was very cozy inside, walking in and out most of the time.

He installed the first electric plant in Grande Prairie at Mr. Joe Vos' flour mill. (What year, we don't remember.)

He delivered the mail once a week from the Kleskun Hill Post Office to the Glen Leslie Post Office. He also audited the books for the Bezanson School District for a time.

After the railroad came in, (1916) he went out and bought a steam well drilling outfit, drilling a well on the homestead in 1917. In 1918 he moved over to a settlement west of Clairmont. He also drilled wells for several others for some time. As we can recall he drilled the first water well for the town of Clairmont in or about 1919 or 1920.

That summer he met Eileen Davis, and in March of 1919 they were married. To the union, four daughters and one son were born. Hazel (Mrs. B. A. Saine of Marietta, G.A.), (Mrs. Elwin Howlett of Vernon, B.C.), Wilma (Mrs. Leslie Burrows of Grande Prairie), Barbara (Mrs. Elmer Neihenke of Spokane, Washington) and Dale living in Vancouver, Washington.

In 1921, he moved to Clairmont and built a livery stable to run in the winter time. But in 1922 someone so kindly set it on fire, that it was a complete loss.

Upon moving back to the farm, he tried raising Silver Foxes with no luck. He got into them just as the slump hit. However, he kept on with a few, which helped in the hardships. Along in the late 20's and on into hungry 30's "so called," he managed an overnight stopping place, for the ones from east of the Smoky River, when the only means they had of getting a wagon box of grain to Grande Prairie for sale was by team of horses. This was a three day trip.

He had the first 32 volt lighting plant and first Xmas tree lights (an unusual thing in those days.) Charged batteries for neighbors, and made his first radio himself. Did a little farming and raised purebred Duroc Jersey pigs until 1945, when he decided to give it all up. After selling to Herbert Kimble in 1946, he moved to Georgia, U.S. The farm house which was still being lived in when he sold to Herbert Kimble was built in 1919.

He lived in Georgia for four years, but finding it much different than expected, he was not happy there so decided to move to west coast in 1950 to try the chenille business. Unable to find a suitable place along the highway where the goods be displayed, he passed away in 1954 at the age of 68, before getting the business started.

Upon the time of his death he had only two grandchildren. Dale and Lois Jean Burrows, residing in Grande Prairie. His daughters Hazel, Rhoda, Wilma and Barbara still live in the above mentioned places with their families. His son Dale and family and wife Eileen still reside in Vancouver, Washington. His wife now has 12 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

ELLWOOD SPINNEY — by Douglas Clarkson

Ellwood Spinney filed on N.W. 22-71-4 in 1917. Old-timers do not recall him having lived in the district. He did very well during the construction of the Alaska Highway, during which he built up a large fleet of trucks and earth moving equipment. For several winters his Cat Trains hauled freight from Grimshaw north to the Northwest Territories.

NEIL VANCE

Neil McMillan Vance was born, raised and educated in Ingersoll, Ontario. He was the fifth child in a family of nine, born to James and Mary Vance.

He came to Crystal Creek with Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Johnston in 1911. Lyman Johnston, Ray Hegler, and Wiley Sawyer came in the same party. Neil homesteaded on the S.E. 5-72-4, west of the 6th.

In the fall of 1914, he went back to Ingersoll and spent the winter visiting his family. In early spring, he returned to Crystal Creek with a carload of farm machinery, furniture, and some cattle.

Later that same spring, a younger sister, Anne came to Crystal Creek to keep house for Neil. Anne came part way by train, finishing the trip by boat, finally arriving at Bezanson. Neil met her here. Anne left in the summer of 1916 on the first train to leave from Grande Prairie.

Neil married Edythe Boyd in 1915. In the fall of 1916 Neil, Edythe and her brother W. T. Boyd, went to Ingersoll to spend the winter there. In the month of December their first child was born to Edythe and Neil, John McMillan Vance.

In the year 1917, Neil settled his family in Toronto while he travelled to Russia and Japan for a farm machinery firm of Martens of New York.

In February of 1917, William T. Boyd and Jessie Vance were married in Ingersoll, Ontario, and came back to Bill's farm in the Crystal Creek area. They lived here until the family were grown, then retired to Grande Prairie in the early 1950's.

In March, 1918, Neil's mother, Mrs. Mary Vance, with her youngest child, Isabelle, came west to the home of Bill and Jessie Boyd. In the spring of 1920, James Vance Jr., a veteran of the war, came out to see the country. Both Mrs. Mary Vance and James Vance homesteaded in the area on the land now owned and farmed by Mr. and Mrs. Don Boyd. In the fall of 1920, Mrs. Vance, James, and Isabelle returned to their home in Woodstock, Ontario. Mrs. Vance had sold the old home in Ingersoll after the death of her husband James, and moved to Woodstock. After spending the winter there, she sold her property and shipped a carload of furniture and household effects to Grande Prairie. These were hauled to Crystal Creek to the former home of Neil Vance, who sold his homestead to Mrs. Vance and James.

In the spring of 1920 Mr. and Mrs. Fred Moore (Agnes Vance) moved to Crystal Creek, where they lived until 1926, when they moved into Grande Prairie and Fred returned to his trade as an upholsterer, working for Mr. J. B. Oliver. Later they returned to Toronto.

In the meantime, Neil Vance, after travelling to South America, following his travels in Russia and

Japan, returned to Toronto, moved his family to Weston, and went to work for Massey Harris. In 1925 Neil went to Australia with this firm, followed by Edythe and four children the next year. Neil remained in Melbourne, Australia, until his death in 1959. He left his widow Edythe (who has since passed away in 1974), two sons, John McMillan Vance and Neil Clifford Vance (who passed away very suddenly in 1968), three daughters, Marion (Mrs. G. A. Douglas), Arlie, (Mrs. M. E. Hargreaves) and Margaret, (Mrs. N. J. McCarthy), all of whom live in Australia.

James Vance died in September of 1927 and was buried in Grande Prairie. Isabelle Vance married Clarence Coleman Raison the winter of 1927, and they farmed in Crystal Creek. They had one daughter, Shirley Lorene Raison. In 1945, they moved to Grande Prairie, where Clarence was steam engineer and head of maintenance at the hospital. Mrs. Mary Vance lived with Clarence and Isabelle until her death in July, 1948.

Clarence passed away suddenly September, 1963, still working at the hospital. His widow, Isabelle Vance Raison still resides in Grande Prairie as does her daughter and son-in-law, Lorene and Allan Hughes, and two granddaughters, Lynn Isabelle, and Leana Joan Hughes.

JAKE WEBER — by Douglas Clarkson

Jake Weber homesteaded in the Crystal Creek area in 1911. He had come from the western United States and was an excellent horseman and packer. He continued to farm with horses long after everyone else had obtained tractors. Since Highway 34 ran through his place, tourists often stopped and took pictures of him and his horses at work. This was a novelty for both, for most of the tourists had never seen horses doing farm work, and Jake was a kindly man who always welcomed a visitor. Jake once told me about helping a group of prospectors pack their supplies back into the mountains. The trip took several days. The prospectors stayed in the mountains and Jake brought the mules back out. Jake was eleven years old at the time. Where would you find such a resourceful boy today?

Jake borrowed a team of oxen from Robert Cochrane to haul the lumber for his cabin. Before he got to the site he had chosen for his cabin both oxen lay down and would not get up, so he had to unload the lumber, and build the cabin where the oxen chose to lay down.

In 1958 Jake sold his farm and retired to live in Grande Prairie. He passed away February 14, 1975, at the age of eighty-nine.

ROY AND ROXIE WHEELER — by Douglas Clarkson

The Wheelers came here from Missouri in 1928, and they had two school age children, Frank and Shirley, and an older daughter Lelma, who stayed in Missouri and married there. The Wheelers brought a few things with them, a pony Betsey, and two little wooly dogs.

They ran the farm and raised beautiful gardens. The children went to school. It was in the Depression and times got very hard. After a few years, they decided to leave Mrs. Hayes' farm, and rent another place. After a while there, they decided to move back to Missouri. Shirley married Duncan Stewart, who lived in Grande Prairie. They now live in Washington, and have one son. Frank went back to Missouri with his parents. Roy passed away two years ago.

HUGH A. WILSON

I was born in January, 1906, and raised in Chilliwack, B.C., and at the age of sixteen, decided to go to Grande Prairie in March of 1922 to visit my Uncle Jackie and Aunt Irene Bayley, of Glen Leslie, Alberta. My uncle was at the railway station to meet me, and we went by wagon to his home. He had a half-section rented at that time from Bill Garrett.

I worked for a year or so with my uncle, then we both decided to try homesteading at Sturgeon Lake, Alberta.



Hugh Wilson cutting grain.



Hugh Wilson with his supply of wood and meat.

We filed on two quarters of land, side by side, bordering the lake on the south side. That summer we put up log buildings and cleared some land for him. That winter I bought a log house and barn from Albin Clarkson, took them apart, and hauled them by sleighs to my homestead. We made a living mostly by fishing and trapping. When we got a wagon or a sleigh load of white fish, we would haul them to Grande Prairie, and peddle them around town for 25c a piece, and returned home with groceries, supplies, etc.

In the spring my aunt was expecting her fifth child, and was rushed to the hospital. She died, but the baby

lived. That ended the homesteading, as he had to take the children to Chilliwack, B.C., and they were placed in homes. He got carpenter work in Chilliwack, and did not return. I decided to find work around Grande Prairie, as I wasn't about to homestead alone.

I worked for a time at Cook's saw mill south of Grande Prairie, then later for Bob Cochrane. That fall I took in the harvest at Carstairs, north of Calgary, then south to Stavely. Then I went to Chilliwack for a visit. I went back to Grande Prairie in 1926. I worked here and there, and finally at Martin Clarkson's. While there, I bought a quarter section of land close to them. They helped me break up land on it, etc. I sold it later at a good price, and bought a half section two miles north of them, near Kleskun Hill in 1928.

I also got married that same year to Edith Knight, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Knight of Kleskun Hill. Our farms were just a mile apart. We stayed on the farm 14 years and went through the Depression in the thirties, trying to get ahead to break land, and the prices of grain were so low. Raising a family then was an up hill grind, as everyone remembers that went through it. But, we had a lot of good times through it all. We decided to sell out and move to Grande Prairie, where we lived for three years. We then left for Vancouver, B.C., and are now retired and live in Los Angeles, California.

MRS. CHRISTINE (DYDE) WOOTTON

The notice in the "Western Producer" from the Golden Years Club of Bezanson, asking for historical material relating to the area, brought back memories of a summer spent teaching at Crystal Creek. It was the summer of 1918. Crystal Creek School had been closed for lack of a teacher, not an uncommon situation that year, so I was to set the wheels of learning in motion again.

There was a difficulty here: no one wanted to "board" the teacher. It was suggested that a small empty house, not far from the school, should be converted to a "teacherage". I was to do the converting. In the meantime, I was to camp out on the leather sofa in the Deep-Creek Johnson's living room. It was a fine big country living-room with a hardwood floor made from the caboose in which the Johnson's had travelled from Edson into Grande Prairie, and it boasted a good piano, as Mrs. Johnson played and sang. But the living room was not designed for permanent teacher occupation.

So immediately Mrs. Johnson and I set out for Grande Prairie with Nick and Remorse, the farm team, to purchase some furnishings for the teacherage. I remember vaguely that there was some suggestion that an old stove could be borrowed, but that a bed and bedding, a table and chair, were necessities that I must look after, upon which I began to wonder whether the district was really interested in having the school opened. However, accompanied by Mrs. Johnson's amused comments, I bought a bed and spring somewhat like a Winnipeg couch and some heavy blankets. At this point Mrs. Johnson said, "Enough for today. Nick and Remorse can't pull anything heavier home!"

1918. This was the summer that the Mounties of the North were allowed to enlist, with the result that every kind of ne'er-do-well followed the rail to the jumping-off place at Grande Prairie. While we were in town making our purchases, Mrs. Johnson and I were regaled with stories of robbery and rumors of murder in the outlying districts. I began to think of my teacherage with some trepidation, as did also Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, who would hear no more talk of teacherage, and my bed, my blankets, and I were established in the unfinished upstairs at Deep Creek, where I remained happily and comfortably for the remainder of the summer.



Miss Dyde with Jean Johnson and smaller girl whose name is not known.



Miss Dyde with Johnson's horse (Remorse), dogs name forgotten.

The school attendance was small. I remember vividly two very much handicapped little Cook girls. They were almost blind. So we struggled daily with a Braille reader: they reading with fingertips, I attempting to recognize a word from a multitude of pin pricks. They usually beat me to its recognition and retired from the field gleeful and triumphant, all three of us amused by the silly assortment of words that we had to read. They were also learning to use a typewriter and doing well with their no-look recognition of the spacing of the letters. I think they were given a lot of help at home. There was also in attendance the Johnson's handicapped daughter (Jean) who must, I think, have suffered brain damage at birth. I had one lively drive to school with Jean when she suddenly opened a large black umbrella and frightened Nick and Remorse off the road into a field of stumps. We were only rescued from that situation by an elder Cook who happened to be working in a field across the road. "Trust in the Lord," Jean was saying as we bumped over the stumps, but I was happy to do with less spiritual aid in the form of Brother Cook. There was also, I remember, a family of Peschongs coming to Crystal Creek, who had a long way to come to school, and I can only hope that the school days were in some measure worth the hours of walking, and the weariness of the road for little boys' legs.

My road to school travelled straight east, through cultivated and uncultivated fields, the uncultivated bright with orange-red lilies in July, and knee-high in vetch. I was always accompanied by swarms of vigorous mosquitoes, and had to keep a branch of a bush continually in operation. Farther east was the direction from which the Peschongs came, and I think I am right in locating the Leslie family in that district too.

When we went north it was to a little church where Mrs. Johnson sang, or to a blueberry patch on Kleskun Hill. The Cochrane family lived in this area.

Visitors at the school were few, but I remember the arrival of Dr. Forbes, the Presbyterian Minister from Grande Prairie, with his spanking team of black horses. That day I rode home in state. I had another very welcome visit from Mrs. Pentland of Lake Saskatoon, a friend from Edmonton days. Mr. Farr, the school inspector, also came and found me working on an enterprise (a word unknown at that time) that involved the whole school. He told me that I was a "grade" teacher, by which he meant that I did not know how to handle an ungraded school.

The Johnston home and the school were the centres of my existence that summer, and when the fall arrived and I left Grande Prairie for Edmonton, the bravery and cheerfulness of the little Cook girls, and the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Sawyer (Mrs. Johnson's mother) went with me as happy memories.

Schools and Churches

CRYSTAL CREEK CHURCH, SCHOOL AND HALL — by Douglas Clarkson

The early history of the church, school and hall are so closely tied together that it is hard to separate them. The church was built by community effort in 1914 and 15 on a site now occupied by the Bill Rutberg home. When the first service was held in the church, many people attended. After the service, all retired to the Cecil Johnson home nearby for refreshments and fellowship. Soon after, a severe storm broke with very heavy rain, forcing everyone to spend the night in the Johnson home.



Crystal Creek school, 1923.



The class at Crystal Creek, 1923-24. Jack and Charlie Dorscheid, Douglas Clarkson, Violet Kimmerly, Merle Laverne and Laurayne Andress, Jennie Grundforsen, Elaine Kimble, Mary Boyd, Elsie and Olive Fogle, Florence Britton.

The first Christmas Concert was held in the church with Mrs. Bill Whitfield being the teacher. First pupils were Ramona and Eunice Cooke and Jean Johnson, Edith Crowe and Peschong children. There may have been others, but no one can recall who they were.

The Crystal Creek School was built in 1917. Mr. Allan Boyd was in charge of the construction. In 1930 the building was enlarged. It continued to operate until 1956 when the school buses began transporting the pupils to Grande Prairie. A few years later the building was sold and moved to Grande Prairie where it is still in service as a house at 9920-101 Avenue.

Over the years 24 teachers had been employed by the local school board.

Excerpts from the minutes of Crystal Creek School Board meetings:



Miss Edith Robertson, teacher at Crystal Creek, 1921 or 22.

January 25, 1934. Moved by Mr. Salmark that beginning 1st of April school shall have 1½ hours noon hour and close at 4:00 p.m. Carried. Moved by Mr. Boyd that contract for getting wood be given to Roy Wheeler. Carried. James E. Clarkson, Sec.-Treas.

May 1, 1933. Moved by Mr. Boyd that Mr. Salmark look after cleaning of barn and cleaning and refilling well. Moved by Mr. Salmark that Herbert and Dorothy Nerstad be allowed to attend school to end of term.

June 28, 1933. Moved by Mr. Salmark that school board offer Miss Rumohr a salary of $750.00 per annum, plus government grant for Grade IX. Carried.

Nov. 2, 1933. School to open at 9:30 a.m., one hour at noon and close at 3:30 p.m. Moved by Mr. Boyd that school board be in favor of the teacher moving a building onto the school grounds to be used as a teacherage.

December 29, 1933. Mr. Salmark moved in appreciation for withdrawal of the grant for grade IX. The teacher may have free use of the wood in the teacherage.

Jan. 13, 1934. Mr. M. Clarkson elected trustee. Mr. Salmark chairman. Hugh Wilson, Sec. Treas. Salary 35.00 per annum.

Feb. 1, 1934. Mr. Wheeler get the contract for getting 15 ricks of wood, split and piled for $17.50.

March 8, 1934. Mr. Salmark moved that teacher send a monthly report to parents of their children.

April 16, 1934. Swings to be fixed up.

June 19, 1934. W. Boyd and Hugh Wilson resigned.

July 4, 1934. Special Meeting. Tom McFetridge elected trustee. $53.00 be given board toward erecting a barn. $15.00 for cleaning school, calcimining wall and ceiling, clean windows, scrub floor, blacken stoves, and re-do blackboards. Hugh Wilson re-engaged as Sec.-Treas.

July 26, 1934. Miss G. Rumohr's resignation, accepted. Miss Margaret McMillan hired. Salary $700.00.

Aug. 8, 1934. Mr. Clarkson to supervise the work on the barn.

Oct. 1, 1934. Board to hold meetings first Monday of



The class at Crystal Creek, 1954.



Anne Lupal, teacher, 1944.



Irma Oatway, teacher, 1943.

each month. Dr. O'Brian was paid $18.00 for vaccination of 36 pupils for smallpox.

Jan. 12, 1935. Alec Fleming elected trustee for 3 years. Sec.-Treas. salary increased to $35.00.

March 1, 1935. No child to be detained after school.

Dec. 2, 1935. Marie McFetridge asked to do the janitor work.

Jan. 18, 1936. Hugh Wilson elected trustee 3 years. Don Marcy elected trustee one year.

Jan. 9, 1937. Jock McDonald elected trustee.

Jan. 15, 1938. Trustees resigned. No new nominations so resignations and documents were sent to the central board.

In 1926 the Crystal Creek Community Club purchased the church and moved it to the site of the present Crystal Creek Hall and the old church became the first Crystal Creek Hall. It was moved by voluntary community effort, sixteen horses furnished the motive power. The first activity in the new hall was the Christmas Concert 1926. The first dance was the wedding dance of Aurthur and Rosie Dorscheid.

In 1929 a kitchen was added to the rear of the building. In 1937 a new hall was built. The old building was dismantled and the lumber used in the new hall. The kitchen, which was still relatively new, was turned and fitted to the new hall and is still in use in 1976. The hall as it stands today was constructed by voluntary community effort. Carl Johnson was the carpenter hired to supervise the construction of the new hall in 1937. He was paid 35c per hour plus board which he received by staying a few days with each of various residents around the district.

Clubs

CRYSTAL CREEK ALTRUIST CLUB — by Gerald Carveth

In May of 1921, a group of ambitious young people in the Crystal Creek School District, which was twelve miles east of Grande Prairie, decided to make things more interesting in their locality and formed the Crystal Creek Altruist Club. Only nine persons joined on that first occasion but soon their fame spread and by the fall, more than fifty members were involved, not only from Crystal Creek, but from the neighboring districts as well.

The Club met every Saturday night for a social evening which might be literary, devotional or musical, debate, spelling bee and once a month, a dance was held with music supplied by the members.

One big achievement of the Club was to publish a paper called THE TATTLER, a fifteen page edition, which when completed, involved the names of all the members either in the Local News, Social Happenings, Editorial, Sports, Fashions, Poetry, Marriage and Divorce, Announcements, Births, Deaths, Classified Ads, Weather Forecast or the Primrose Department.

A sample of the fifteen pieces of GUESS WHO pieces of poetry comprised by the Editor and Staff reads:

I am a scholar, learned, wise,
Of brains I have many,
I'm stuffed with knowledge to the eyes,
It's cost me quite a penny.
To you my name is not unknown,
If I should but reveal it,
The ladies would not cast a stone,
But each attempt to steal it.
On Sabbath days my voice resounds
Throughout the quiet Hall,
At other times I'm out of bounds,
I like to play football.
I like to play for folks to dance
When at a Chivaree
But the parson's all will make me prance
If you ever tell on me.

Although there were three "Sky Pilots" listed in the membership of the Club, the members had no trouble diagnosing this piece of poetry as portraying Peter Dawson, the Presbyterian student minister who, later in life, represented Bow River Constituency in the Alberta Provincial Parliament and was Speaker in the House for twenty-seven years.

The Club flourished for four years but by that time, Cupid's darts had been so effective that the former members were paying more attention to family duties and the Club diminished.

Miscellaneous Anecdotes

THE LIGHTER SIDE — by Douglas Clarkson

When sedan cars first were available, many people were afraid to ride in them in case they might upset and the occupants would be cut by broken glass. The owner of one of the first sedans in the district took some of his friends and went to a sports, some distance away where they proceeded to celebrate. He upset the car. On returning home the news soon got around. He was asked if he broke much glass. The reply was, "Nope, just one bottle."

An outspoken immigrant from England who did not like banjo music once told our local banjo player,

"Your playing sounds just like a horse galloping down the street with three shoes missing."

Elections are not what they used to be. Legend has it that during an election campaign, a barber in Grande Prairie had a customer lathered up for a shave when he saw a political adversary standing across the street. The barber crossed the street and became engaged in a heated political discussion. The customer finally washed his face and left.

FAITHFUL SERVANTS — by Douglas Clarkson

In writing the history of a district, it is certainly in order to mention those who served their employers faithfully and well for long periods of time. Although few, if any, settled in the district, they certainly contributed to the progress of the district. Those that come to mind are: Carl Johnson, Archie Matheson, Harry McCardle, Jack Lupton, Arthur Weavis, Hazel Penny, Margery Kolosky, Charlie Hilliar and his good wife, Auntie May. There are no doubt others of worthy mention, but time has a habit of dimming one's memory.

THE SMOKY RIVER FERRY — by Douglas Clarkson

The first ferry was built at the old Bezanson townsite in May, 1911. It was built by the late Dick Brinkman. Lumber was obtained from a sawmill on the Wapiti River, no doubt the Argonaut mill. It was floated down stream and put into operation where the present day bridge now spans the river. According to the late A. McQuarrie, district engineer at that time, this was one of the most troublesome ferries in Alberta. There were two locations where the ferry could be operated. Local residents were bitterly divided as to which crossing would be the most practical. The ferry was prone to disaster just before an election which brought politics into the controversy and sometimes put the district engineer in a touchy situation.

In 1913, an election year, high water broke the ferry loose and took it so far down stream it was not practical to bring it back. A new ferry was built at a sawmill on the Wapiti River and floated down and put in operation without unreasonable delay.

At this time the original townsite of Bezanson, located on the west bank of the Smoky, opposite the mouth of the Simonette, was booming. In the winter of 1914-15 the residents of the townsite made the proposition that if a ferry were installed there, they would operate it without further cost to the government. This offer was accepted and in 1915 a ferry was built and put in operation there. It is apparent from the records that two ferries were in operation on the Smoky for a short time. Unfortunately high water pulled this ferry from its moorings and took it down stream. The ferry from the present crossing was placed on skids and hauled by horses up the river on the ice and put in operation at the old Bezanson townsite with the late Pat McCann in charge. This moving was accomplished by the late Jim Brooks. The date of this move is not accurately recorded. By 1921 a sandbar was forming in the river, making the operation of the ferry difficult. The hopes of a town developing there were fast fading. During high water the ferry broke loose and floated some distance down stream. It was relocated and taken down to the site of the bridge where it continued to operate until the bridge was built. Years later the ferry man at the time the ferry broke loose, (the late Pat McCann) remarked that its breaking loose may have been helped by an Irishman whom he would not name.

Pictures of Interest



Jim Clarkson and Molly Waller dressed for a hard time dance.



Waiting for the train in 1927.



Dinner time on a berry picking trip.



Original caboose of Rev. Sandy Forbes.



Hugh Boyd, Bob and Marjorie on the binder, 1928.



Rev. Forbes first house in Grande Prairie.



Mr. Waller and Molly leaving Clarkson's for their home in what later became Valleyview.



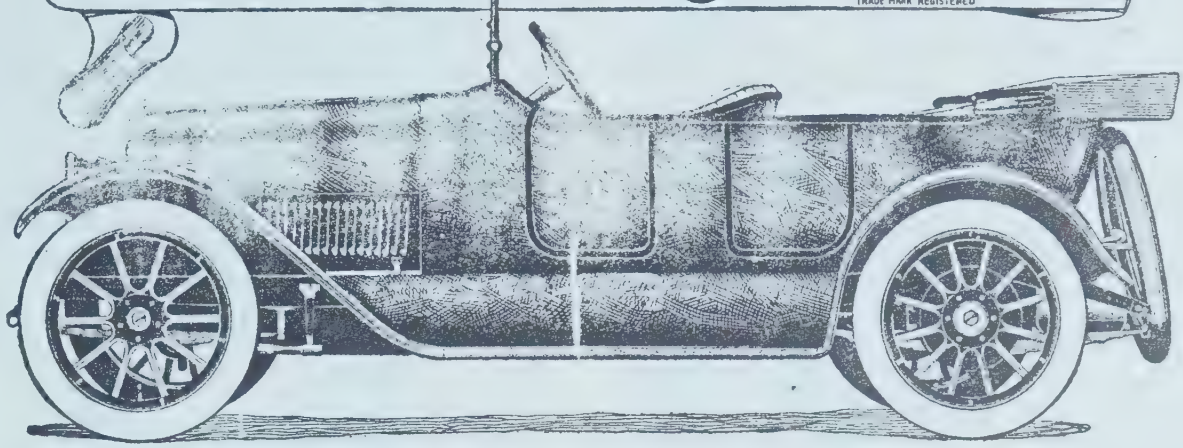
The Peschong family early.

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Running in low gear, with a total reduction at the rear wheels of 11-¼ to 1, the car traveled 8 miles to the gallon of gasoline and consumed but 7 quarts of oil—proof positive of a perfect cooling, ignition, and lubricating system, and of a perfectly balanced power plant as well.

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Model 33—The Kokomo "Six"—a "light" 7-passenger touring car, 127-inch wheelbase, weight 3050 lbs.	1550

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ELSIE J. MONKMAN BOYD

I attended High School in Lake Saskatoon and from there went to Normal School in Edmonton. Then I returned to Grande Prairie and Lake Saskatoon districts in May, 1923 with my new skills.

I was hired by Martin Clarkson, chairman of the Crystal Creek School District No. 3403, to begin teaching on July 20, 1923. The people of Crystal Creek were a friendly and enterprising folk who formed an altruistic social club composed of young people, bachelors, mothers and fathers. Meetings were held every two weeks to play cards (whist or five hundred), sing, debate, and sometimes dance — providing a pleasant break in the winter evenings. The club lasted several years.

Hugh Boyd often came to these gatherings. He was a tall young man of strong athletic build, well known in the Peace River country by early settlers as a wrestler. He had matches at the early sports and fairs with such wrestlers as Ed Heller of Beaverlodge and Harley Conrad of Clairmont, among others.

Hugh usually went to Cranbrook or Fernie in British Columbia in the spring to work in logging camps, returning in the fall to his farm. He was highly experienced in all phases of the logging and forest industry.

After a courtship of over a year, Hugh and I were married on Easter Monday, April 13, 1925 at the home of my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Monkman, at Cut Bank Lake. Rev. Charles Hopkins, a Methodist Minister, officiated.

When school holidays finally came, we settled down on Hugh's homestead to farm, but a dry summer and no crops decided Hugh to return to lumber-jacking in the British Columbia Forests. The following spring, April 1926, I joined him with our infant daughter.

Due to hard times in the lumber business, we returned to Grande Prairie in March of 1927 to farm. Later our son Bob was born and then throughout the next few years, Brian, Lois and Muriel were born.

After teaching at Crystal Creek from October, 1944 to 1951, I was engaged to teach at Hermit Lake. But sad changes in our family occured on March 15, 1952, when our dear husband and father passed away suddenly. I then remained at home with my family.

In June of 1952, I once again started teaching at Crystal Creek and stayed until 1954. In 1954 and 1955 I was placed in North Bad Heart School. From there I went to Somme School and Harry Balfour School.

Finally, in June, 1968, I came to the close of my career as a teacher in the County of Grande Prairie No. 1. I have valued the county's consideration of me and am thankful for its assistance through the hard and lean years of my life. I worked hard and gave my best, despite any mistakes.

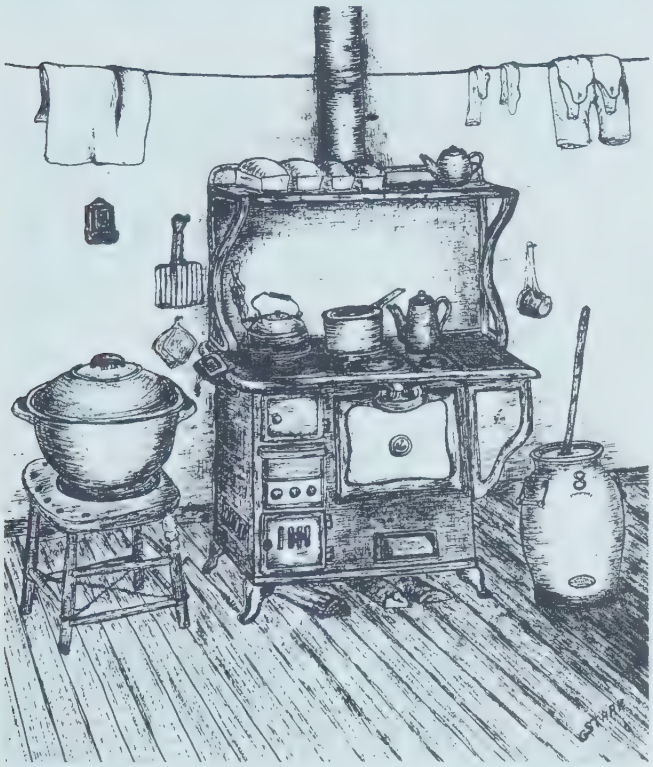
Many friendships were formed with former pupils and parents, as well as among teaching staff and principals. I regret that I do not always recognize grown pupils, now so changed.

Retired in Edmonton, I now enjoy hobbies, reading, and travelling to visit my family — Marjorie Cline in Chicago, Muriel Gidley in Ottawa, Lois Boyd in Vancouver, Nancy Whalen near me in Edmonton, my sons and their wives — Robert and Shirley (nee Norton) in Grande Prairie, and Brian and Jean (nee Moon) on our old farm where our families love to visit and congregate. Because of my travels, my grandchildren have dubbed me the "Flying Grandmother."



Moving Smoky River Bridge to temporary peers. Making way for new wider bridge Sept. 1978.

East Kleskun



AL ALDERMAN — written by George Laverick

Al Alderman homesteaded the S.E. 36-72-4 about 1915.

Al and his wife Nellie lived there until she passed away in 1935. In 1938 he remarried and continued to live on the homestead until May, 1945 when he sold the farm and moved to Coquitlam, B.C., where he resided until his death in 1952.

He had a stationary sawmill at his farm and sawed lumber for his own use in the early 1930's. He had acquired two more quarters of land a few miles to the N.E.

Both he and his first wife were musical and did their bit towards helping to provide music for the school house — dances, etc. Later Al was a member of an orchestra and played the drums.

WALTER AND MARTHA ANTONIO

In the fall of 1962 we decided to buy some different land. We lived six miles east of Sexsmith which was originally the John Balderson place. We owned the N.½ of 12-73-5 W6. We were married in January of



The Antonio Family. Left to right, in back row: Joan, Martha, Jimmy, Danny, and Walter. Front row: Tommy, Allen, Kathy, and Mary-Anne.

1949, it was very cold. Our parents were both Polish immigrants. Walter's parents were John and Anna Antonio and Martha's were Adolf and Adela Pinsch. Our land was terribly heavy and it was hard to farm and crops were hard to grow. So in 1962 we bought the Glen Secrest farm the S.E. 5-73-3-6.

In the spring of 1963 we sold our land east of Sexsmith and bought the Frank Kochalyk and John Edwards land, so now we ended up with seven quarters of land. Later we bought one quarter of land from Hans Ruch, Danny our son now owns that.

We moved here in the summer of 1964, it was a very wet year.

Six of our eight children were born on our farm east of Sexsmith. They were Danny, Kathy, Tommy, Mary Ann, Joan and Allan. A year after we moved here Jimmy was born and five years later our last arrival, Patti Lyne.

Danny our eldest married Mary Repetowski in November of 1973, they live in Sexsmith, they have a one year old daughter Teresa. Two years later Kathy married Raymond Shandro of Andrew, Alberta and reside there on the family farm. The rest of the children are still at home. Tommy works for Proctor & Gamble Pulp Mill.



Patti Antonio taken in 1971.

All the children attended schools in Bezanson and Sexsmith. Danny spent one year at the Fairview College. He won a $100 bursery there, it was given to the boy who they thought would spend the money most wisely. Kathy graduated and worked in Edmonton for the Edmonton Journal, while in the city she met Raymond.

We have a deep well which is 455 feet. Water is hard to get here, so alot of people have dams.

We cleared about 300 acres here. Most of the land was brushed and broke by Roy Orbanski of Grande Prairie.

We have a lot of card parties during the winter months in the community and everyone attends.

Walt's hope is when we retire, to move to the B.C. interior. He loves fruit, so in his old age he wants to sit under the apple tree.

JOHN AND BILL BARNES

John and Bill Barnes were father and son.

Bill Barnes homesteaded the S.E. 35-72-4, about 1914. He lived on his homestead until his father, John Barnes joined him about 1915.

John homesteaded S.W. 35-72-4.

They built better living quarters on the father's homestead and lived there together for several years.

MIKE AND MARY BABNICK — written by Anna Babnick (Stojack)

Mike and Mary Babnick, along with my Uncle Peter Babnick (single), came to Canada from North Dakota in the spring of 1916. Mike and Mary filed on a homestead, the half section N.W. and S.W. 26-72-4 W6. Pete Babnick filed on the half-section adjoining N.E. and S.E. 26-72-4 W6. We came from North Dakota on a freight train, along with the horses, cattle and some equipment. We stopped in Edmonton, that's where we lost our dog. Somehow he got out of the train.

There were three families that came together: the Babnicks, Matychucks, and Struhans. We were all close neighbours, helping each other.

Mr. Strunans, the carpenter, helped us build our log house. It was heated with a wood heater and cook



Mike Babnick and his pigs, taken about 1919.

stove. Kerosene oil lamps were used in the house and lanterns for the barns. The water was obtained from a well owned by the neighbours, and hauled with a stoneboat in the winter.

The land was all cleared by hand and the plowing was done by a team of horses. We grew wheat, oats, (mostly) and flax. We raised good potatoes, cabbage and onions in the garden but for some reason we couldn't grow cucumbers.

We had dances at East Kleskun school, dances were waltzes, two steps and square dances. There were also church services held once a month, a Priest came from Grande Prairie. Box socials were also a great entertaining community event.

In the summer, we got water from a dam, my father had dug, and I can remember, it wasn't too far from the house. I saved my little sister, Pearl, from drowning. She was only about two years old and was sitting on the end of a plank that was out over the water, with her feet in the water. If she had just turned around, she would have fallen in. I told her to stay still



First class picture taken at East Kleskun School. Taken about 1919. Miss Morrison was the teacher. L. to R.: Marceline Calliou, Lila Delaney, Irene Whalen, Edna Delaney, Mary Struhan. Fourth row: Johny Babnick, Annie Babnick, Florestine Calliou, Ada Delaney, Annie Matychuck. Third row: William Deserly, Edward Deserly, Laura Supernault, Dillphine Calliou. Second row: Clara Gray, Nick Babnick, Joe Gladiou. Front row: Archie Delaney, Wossell (Bill) Babnick, Johny Delaney, Jim Matychuck.

and walked up behind her and lifted her off. I was so scared, I don't know how I did it, but I will never forget it.

There were seven children in our family; Anna, John, Nick, Bill, Pearl, and twins, Katheryn and Sophia. The twins were born after we moved here and one died at birth in November, 1918 and the other when 16 months old.

Anna, John, Nick, Bill and Pearl are all married and have grandchildren of their own.

We attended the West Kleskun School for about one year, then before the East Kleskun School was built, about 1916 or 1917, we attended an Indian reservation school (Calliou school) which was one large building.

The crops did not do so well and my dad could not make a living for the children, so we left and got as far as Washington State, where we have been ever since, over 55 years. My Dad went to work in the mines for awhile, then bought a three acre farm of berries, raspberries and blackberries. He made a pretty good living there, it was close to the town of Puyallup.

My Dad passed away in 1965 and Mother in 1966.

I live in Tacoma, which is twelve miles from Puyallup. My brother, John, lives close by, the others live further away.

JOE BEATTY

He homestead the N.W. 32-72-3 W6. Joe had a stopping place at Egg Lake (Eaglesham) with Joe Germaine.

ISAAC (IKE) AND BERTHA BOYER

My father, Ike Boyer was born in Annvil, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. in 1881. When he was eighteen years



B. row: Mabel Cumberworth, Lil Oe, Irene Cumberworth, Mrs. Ike Boyer, Mrs. Bill Fitzpatrick, Mary Podulsky holding Julia, Evelyn Thompson. Front row: Dale Thompson, Ross Thompson, Clarence Boyer, Margurite Fitzpatrick, Gertrude Fitzpatrick.

old he came over to South Dakota, where he worked on a ranch. In 1911 he moved to the Peace River Country and filed on the N.E. 35-72-4 W6th, and made three of four trips over the Edson Trail. He helped the Turners move in with several cattle and horses.

My father married Bertha M. Delaney in Grande Prairie on June 18, 1919. They lived on the farm until Mother passed away in 1946 and Father in 1947. They rest in the Glen Leslie Cemetery.



Mr. Ike Boyer taken in the 1920's.

There are four of us children in the Boyer family. Clarence is the oldest. We all attended the East Kleskun school and my first teacher was Mrs. Sandy (Jim) Storm.

After returning from the Armed Forces in 1946, I went farming. In 1948 I married Ruby Harriet Norton of Bezanson and we farmed until 1953, then moved to Grande Prairie. We have four children; Brian, who is married to Jackie (Jarrett) and have one son, Clayton. Sharon is married to Dale Sheridan and they have two sons; Grant and Rodney. Verna works for Trumpeter Travel and lives in Grande Prairie. Wayne still lives at home and works for Wm. Shannon and Sons in Grande Prairie.

My sister, Ruth (Mrs. Bert Butler) is at Richmond, B.C. and has one son, Rick Smith.

I have two brothers; Ray married Rita Robideau in 1953 and have three sons; Eldon, Doug, and Arnie. Harry married Jean (Cambell) in 1954 and they have four children; Danny, Debbie, Terry and Glen.

THE BROWN FAMILY

Our father George Walker Brown was born at Roadside St. Cyrus, Scotland in February, 1884. As a young man he was accepted on the Boden Powell Police Force and shortly after served with E Division 25 Troop of the South African Constabulary. Two years later he received his discharge and returned home to Scotland, but the urge for new experiences prompted him to leave; this time for Canada.

At Winnipeg he became a member of the city police force, but in 1905 with the desire to head west, he took a job, cooking in a logging camp in the McLeod area. He cooked on the Grand Trunk and went as far as Tete Jaune Cache.

Then coming north to Sawridge (now known as Slave Lake), he and his friend started what was then called an "Eating Place". His cooking career was in full swing. He was the first proprietor of the first Hotel in Sawridge.

There he met Lucie L'Hirondelle who came with her sister to keep house and help her brother in "Auguste L'Hirondelle's Store". Lucie was born in February, 1886 at St. Albert. She had left her home near Morinville by horse and buggy, they even had to walk at times. It was further by team and wagon. The nicest part of her journey was by boat.

In July, 1913 our parents were married at her home near Morinville. They went back to Sawridge and began their first home in the hotel. The hotel was a big business by then; as there were many travellers going north. Mother told us great batches of bread were baked daily; 100 pounds of flour into bread alone; pies were an endless stream as well as cookies and cakes. Well by this time more help was needed so two more of Mother's sisters came.

In April, 1914 Violet was born. Our father decided he would like to see further north where everyone was going; so in the summer of 1914, he and another fellow left the hotel in the capable hands of the women folk and started out. They landed in the Grande Prairie area on sports day. They looked over the surroundings, but soon headed back to Sawridge.

There he homesteaded. It was near the river; not too far from the little town. As the river had no banks, Mother said it was lovely. They eventually got the buildings up, and moved to the homestead and rented out the hotel. Mother told us how they stood on the bank of the river and caught fish for any meal.

Julia arrived, then John and Gertie. Then in 1918 the flu epidemic took over. It was terrible, with folks sick everywhere. Doctors were not available; those who were not sick tried to help those who were. George Brown and the R.C.M.P. were kept busy. Mother said they would make the broth and a knock would come at the door. They set the kettle out and all she saw of our father was when he picked the kettle up. This went on ever so long. Those men were so busy they could barely keep up with feeding the sick and burying the dead. But fortunately our family escaped the flu. Rachel and Donald were then added to the family.

In 1920 there was a flood at Sawridge and soon the river overflowed; in no time at all; it seemed, it was at the doorstep. There was barely time to get together what was needed. We were taken to the Hotel in a boat. Mother said how sad it was to see the animals all huddled on higher spots. Those were her last memories of the homestead. They had cattle, a few sheep, horses, ducks, and chickens, all left behind. They took the swaying train to Edmonton. Can you imagine parents with six children, leaving everything they owned under water? The funny part was Gertie, was small enough, she kept telling Mom "Rachel keeps pushing me" as the train lurched along. Sawridge was gone forever.

But father was not one to be idle for long. He began looking around, cooking here and there till he heard of the prosperities of the "Coal Brauch". Soon he took off and got a job, cooking in the only hotel "Mt. Cheviot Hotel" at Mountain Park for Mr. King. It was "at the end of the steel" as the saying was. He found a place for the family, and Mother and the children followed. There in 1922 we had another addition to the family. This time twins, a girl and a boy. Paddy and Patricia were the first set of twins born at Mt. Park and were quite a novelty. We talked about our two babies with pride all the time. But soon we found out we had double trouble because what one didn't think of, the other one did. They were Julia and Violet's responsibilities as our Mother was plagued with seiges of rheumatism



George Brown and Jim Evans at Buffalo Lakes Lumber camp.

most of the time. We were at Mt. Park until 1924. Unrest began to unsettle the miners and soon there were talks of strikes. When the strike came father decided to move the family to a farm so he bought a quarter section from his brother-in-law near Morinville. So away we went to the farm. Our father built a large house there and we had plenty of room for a growing family. Mother was unable to do the baking, so our father took over the bread baking which was no small job. The time we shall never forget was when he had a row of lovely bread rising in pans and he told Julia and Violet to keep an eye on those "two", as he was going out for awhile. Of course being young it did not take much to distract us from our duty and soon forgot about the twins, until our father called us and we were stopped in our tracks, as we saw the disaster those two had caused. Our father, being a man who believed in buying staples in large quantities had pepper in a large can which they took the lid off of and began to decorate each loaf with little fistfulls of pepper in one place or the other. They were only three years of age, and of course, we were older and needless to say what the consequences were. Lloyd was born on the farm and at the age of 14 months had polio. Doreen was born there too.

In 1929 our father became restless once more. He decided to head north to the Grande Prairie country. He rented from the Administrator of an estate near Bezanson. From here seven children went to the Somme school. When he came to the place he met his first neighbor, Harry Card, whom he had met on the Grand Trunk, so he enjoyed his new neighbor, who was a jovial sort of person, and who did many a good turn for us.

Then we moved to the Monisterski farm up on Kleskun Hill as it was a larger house. Our father, in 1931, with a fellow by the name of Jim Good took a trip up to Hudson Hope. Jim Good was an ex-R.C.M.P. We were always more or less frightened of this person with his bushy eyebrows and brusque manner. He lived just across the road from us in a little sod roofed shack, which was called the Rosser place.

Our most treasured memories as we were young was when in the evening or on a dull rainy day, our father would take his mandolin and played the scottish songs and many others. He would play and mother

would mend the endless pairs of socks, with her toes tapping and humming along, with all of us sitting around them. We often wondered how she could have the patience to weave so neatly those holes in heel and toe. But with the sweet tunes from the mandolin the task was made easier.

Then we rented the Storm place. Jim Storm lived in a small place there too. He was quite a person. He would buy candy and come over, tap on the door and come in tossing candy. What a scramble! There were kids everywhere. The kids went to East Kleskun School then. Then of course the depression came. Our father was away cooking in the winter for Jim Evans at Buffalo Lakes. He then bought land from Mrs. Hulda Turner; N.E. 36-72-4 W6th. It was originally Jack Fitzpatrick's homestead, which had a house and buildings on it. He also bought the Carlin homestead across from it; N.W. 31-72-4 W6th. There were only a few acres broken on the place, but he broke and brushed more with horses and picked roots and rocks with all hands helping. From November to breakup he cooked at The Buffalo Lakes Lumber Company, and later for different companies. There was always work for him.



George Brown (right) and son Donald.

"On To The Coast" Spirit Of Men In Monkman Pass

That "On to The Coast!" was the spirit actuating the men working in the Monkman Pass was the report brought back by the East End crew who after doing their bit for nine days returned home on Wednesday forenoon.

Besides filling the holes, the East Enders widened the road for twelve miles. The work done did not cost the Association a nickel, as the men furnished their own equipment and grub.

The crew spoke highly of their cook, George Brown, who was punctuality itself -and a cook par excellence.

"We were surprised at the easy gradients in the pass," was the way Dan Minchin summed up their impressions of the Monkman Pass route.

Eleven men from Nampa arrived on Tuesday to put in ten days or two weeks of voluntary work.

In the summer they had large gardens to care for and one by one the boys were his helpers at camp; each one as he grew old enough. The girls worked out as domestic help. Wages were from $5.00 to $10.00 per month. One by one we left home and as times got better, mom and dad built a large house which is still there, with Paddy the lone occupant.

Julia married Harold Ford, John married Louise Platzer, Violet married George Knight, Donald married Patricia Rycroft, Rachel married Roy Tink, Patricia married Vernon Ford, Gertie married Gordon Edginton and Doreen married T. C. Lwelton.

Father passed away in May, 1957, Mother passed away in December, 1972 and Lloyd passed away in June, 1973.

The new house was first heated by a huge coal and wood furnace. Then later our father had a lighting plant put in with many, many batteries; which seemed to be such a marvel. Water was always a problem. In the fall of 1958 they decided to try to drill for water and sure enough water was there at 160 feet. They managed to get it to the house. Finally the power came along and next the phone lines were put in.

HARRY CARLIN — written by niece Marguerite Laverick

Harry Carlin filed April 6th, 1912 on the N.W. 31-72-3 W6 in what was later the East Kleskun school district.

He married Alice Fitzpatrick on November 30th, 1914 and they made their first home at the above location. They resided there until 1919. They had 2 children, a daughter, Lucille, and a son Gerald.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Carlin now live in Vancouver, B.C. This has been their home for the past many years.

FERNAND AND MADELAINE CLESSE

In August, 1913 Fernand and Madelaine Clesse moved to Holden, Alberta. Then in 1915 they moved to their homestead on the S.W. 19-72-3 W6th in the East Kleskun district. Their transportation up here was by mules.

The house was constructed of logs, heated with wood and lighted by coal oil lamps and candles. The source of their drinking water was obtained from wells and creeks.

They cleared their land by hand and the farming was done with mules and horses.

Mr. Clesse died in the spring of 1918 at Sexsmith, on the Emerson place, where they lived at that time.

The neighbours helped put the crop in for Mrs. Clesse after her husband's passing. Mrs. Clesse passed away several years ago.

Their children were Anthony and Francis Gorrie who came up here with them. In May, 1918 their son Joe Clesse was born.

Anthony married Kate Welter and moved back to Holden in November, 1919. Francis married Henry Hanson and also moved back to Holden. They have lived there ever since. Joe Clesse is still living; address unknown.

ED CONEY FAMILY

I came to the Bezanson district from Scotland, May 12, 1928, along with my parents, two sisters, and three brothers.

We settled on the N.½ 1-73-3 W6th, 4½ miles north and 1 mile east of the Bezanson store (the Frank Orr place.) This district was later known as the Fitzsimmons district; named after Scotty Fitzsimmons.

I homesteaded that same year, the N.E. 30-73-2 W6th.

I worked out the next five years as wages were good and when the hungry thirties hit; we had enough to do, proving up the homestead and farming what land we had in crop.

In 1932, I married Roberta (Bobbie) Ellen Richard. Her family had moved into the district, the same year we did.

In 1938, I bought the S.W. 33-73-3 W6th, known as the Lawler place. We lived there until I enlisted in the Canadian Army in 1940. When I was discharged in October, 1946, I purchased the N.W. 30-73-3 W6th, and the N.E. 25-72-4 W6th, the Blake Wager place. This land was in the East Kleskun district and I farmed there for twenty years.

I moved a house on the east side and lived there the first five years, then when the East Kleskun school, which was on the west side, was closed in favor of the Centralized School at Bezanson, I bought the buildings and the land and lived there until we moved to Grande Prairie, where I now reside.

After losing the wife in 1966, I sold this land in 1967, to Pete Naharniak.

We had seven children: four boys and three girls. The youngest boy died at nine months. The others are married; Marjory in Calgary, Jean and Faye in Bezanson, Keith in Debolt, and Rick and Brian in Grande Prairie. There are twenty-five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Schools attended were Lindsay Fitzsimmons, Calgary, East Kleskun, Bezanson, and Grande Prairie.

The first farmer I worked for, was Tom Rice, who had the land where Gordon Heasler is now. My first name is Ed. He insisted on introducing me as "Ted", with the result this named stayed with me.

At East Kleskun we always had a real good softball team and most of their success had to be credited to Bob Fenton, who spent a lot of time coaching the kids.

KEN CONNERY

He homesteaded the N.W.¼ 17-72-3 W6th in 1916.

THE COWELL FAMILY

The Cowell family, consisting of Ernest, his wife Nettie, and their three children; Emaline, Koreen, and Lawrence moved to Enchant, Alberta from Northwood, Iowa in 1909. There Myrtle was born. After a few good years their luck changed and after being hailed out and then dried out they moved to Biggar, Saskatchewan.

After hearing glowing reports of the Peace River Country they shipped their possessions to Grande Prairie. The two older daughters, Emaline, now Mrs. Clarence Colton, and Koreen, then Mrs. William Keay, were living in High Prairie.

In 1930 the Cowell's and Myrtle moved to the Jim Storm place at East Kleskun. Myrtle attended the school there and the teacher, Miss Grace Allen



The Lawrence Cowell family in 1939.



Planting potatoes on the Bill Storm place in 1939 or 1940. Lawrence Cowell with back to tractor.

boarded with them. Later that year she became Mrs. William Ferris.

Late that fall they were joined by Lawrence and his wife Dorothy. They built a log house on the Jones place across the way.

In 1932 they moved to Dimsdale and remained there for sixteen years. Myrtle married Gordon Wagner and now lives in Grande Prairie.

Ernie Cowell is remembered best as a congenial host and interesting talker.

Mrs. Cowell sewed beautifully and made clothes for her own family and many others. She knit, crocheted, and made many quilts; some of which are the proud possessions of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

She acted as mid-wife on many occasions and helped neighbors who were ill. Many people remember the delicious meals she cooked. She was always busy, kind and helpful.

Ernie passed away in 1955 and Nettie in 1967.

LAWRENCE COWELL FAMILY

Lawrence met Dorothy Gray when she came from her home at Provost to teach the Wapiti school. They were married June 13, and moved to East Kleskun. Late that fall they built a log house on the Jones place. In the spring of 1933 they moved to the Bill Storm place with their two girls. Evelyn was born in 1931 and Kathleen was born in 1933. In 1938 a son Arnold was born followed by Heather in 1941.

The two older girls went to the East Kleskun School. Several of the teachers boarded with the family including Margaret Hardisty who later became Mrs. Stan Fenton.

Lawrence bought a truck and hauled grain for many local farmers. There were no grain augers in those days, you shovelled. He grew wheat and barley and in 1940 purchased a Massey Harris Clipper combine.

Dorothy was a charter member of the Cheerful Companions Club, an organization still active at East Kleskun and Kleskun Hill.



Butterfly quilt made by Cheerful Companions Club in 1942.

It was a good community and everyone worked and played together. Dances were held at the school and during the summer everyone gathered for ball games and picnic suppers. Sometimes cars and trucks were loaded with happy people on their way to picnic at the



Ernie and Nettie Cowell taken in 1952 in High Prairie.

Smoky or to spend a day at the Beaverlodge Experimental Station. Card games were popular on winter evenings. It was not at all unusual to serve breakfast to your card playing guests.

In 1942, Lawrence was asked to buy his brother-in-laws' farm at High Prairie. After some hesitation he decided to do this and the family moved in February, 1943. They missed their old friends for a long time but were happy in High Prairie.

For nine years he ran an Illustration Station under the Beaverlodge Experimental Station. Fertilizer tests were made, control of mare's tail and other weeds researched and various field trails conducted.

In 1952 another daughter, Sandra Lea joined the family.

Lawrence sold his farm in 1971 and he and Dorothy moved to the house they built in High Prairie.

Lawrence passed away in August, 1976. Dorothy remains in High Prairie.

Evelyn married Ward Nicholson and they had three children; Carol, Kevin and Gary.

Kathleen (called Kay) married Clarence McLean and have Richard, Randy, David, and Melanie.

Arnold married Dorothy Smyth and their children are Billy, Curt, Lana and Gayle.

Heather became Mrs. Paul Gass and their children are Shannon, Darlene, and Shawn.

Sandra married Donald Cox.

NICHOLAS CRACK

Nicholas homesteaded the S.E. 18-72-3 W6 in 1913.

FRANCIS CURRY

Francis was nicknamed Hump Curry. He was a driver around the docks at Vancouver and Prince Rupert. He homesteaded the S.E. 17-72-3 W6 in 1913. He went back to Boston.

CZUPRYK FAMILY

George Czupryk was born in Austria. He arrived in British Columbia in 1910 at the age of eighteen and worked throughout Canada and the U.S.A.

He met and married Pauline Stusik in Canora, Saskatchewan. Pauline came to Canada with her parents from Austria and settled in Canora.

George and Pauline homesteaded east of Grande Prairie known as the Kleskun Hill district on the N.E. 18-72-3 W6th.

It was here they cleared land, with the help of two bachelor friends, to build a log house. The log cabin was heated by wood stored during the warmer months and was lighted by coal oil lamps or candles made from suet. In winter, melting snow on a wood stove provided water and in the summer it was drawn from a spade dug shallow well, or from a creek. Milk and butter were kept fresh by putting them in the well or cooling them in the nearby creek.

During the summer months wild berries were picked and dried or canned. The women would all get together in a wagon, with their children, they would pack a picnic lunch and spend the day in the berry patch. Berries consisted of high bush and low bush cranberries, high and low bush blueberries, saskatoons, raspberries, gooseberries, chokecherries, and strawberries. Several types of mushrooms were also picked for consumption.

Wild game and vegatables were canned for use during the winter months. Pork was smoked and salted.

The clothes were washed in a tub or bucket, by hand, on a scrub board. Homemade soap was made from beef tallow and wood ashes, for scrubbing floors and washing clothes.

Wheat was planted and used for flour to be made into bread that was baked in a wood stove oven.

The women all got together for sewing bees, quilting bees, cooking for threshers, grinding oats (for animal feed), and for sawing the wood to be used in the winter time.

Many hardships with cold, hard winters were endured. A trapper trail, known as the Edson Trail, was made to Fort Edmonton, north, crossing the Smoky River, that was the food exchange, where trappers brought their furs to trade for supplies.

As years passed more families moved into the district. There were many community projects such as building houses, sheds, etc. After several years the farmers progressed well enough, they had improved gravel roads, enabling them to haul their grain and livestock to be sold.

Schools the children attended were East Kleskun, Lindsay High School, Fitzsimmons; in the Bezanson area and St. Joseph's High School in Grande Prairie. All the schools were two and a half miles from home, other than the one in Grande Prairie. The only means of transportation to school was on foot. Occasionally they rode a horse.

Many dances were attended by the whole family. The children were put to sleep around a pot bellied stove, while the parents danced till the early morning hours.

In the winter cabooses were used for transportation. They were pulled by a team of horses and heated by a small wood stove made from a five gallon can.



Johny Czupryk.



The windup of threshing in the fall of 1945. L. to R.: Gordon Thompson, Dale Thompson, Leslie Burrows, Harry Bulford, Andy Czupryk, Wallace Riegner, Pete Czupryk, Martin Czupryk. Taken at Diederich's farm.

There were nine children in the family: five sons and four daughters, all married and still living.

Martin, living in Edmonton, is married and has two sons. One of them is married.

John is married and living in Calgary. He has three sons, only one is left at home.



Annie, Mary, and Helen Czupryk taken around 1941.

Pete is living in Edmonton. He has one son and one daughter; both living at home.

Randy lives in Calgary and has four children, one daughter and three sons, two at home.

George lives in Calgary and has two sons; both at home.

Margaret (Mrs. Roblin) married and living in Abbotsford, B.C., has two children; one son and one daughter, both married.

Mary (Mrs. Coleman) married and living in Louisiana, U.S.A., has three sons.

Annie (Mrs. Bill Williams) lives in Ottawa and has two sons and two daughters.

Helen (Mrs. Charlie Suchy) lives in Alexandria, Louisiana, U.S.A., and has two sons.

George Sr. passed away in 1954 and Pauline passed away in March, 1945.

RE: ARCHIE ALBERT DELANEY — submitted by Alice Balmer (former Alice Delaney) 9626 - 91 A Avenue, Grande Prairie — Phone 532-7611

Archie was born on the 24th of February, 1914, at Thessalon, Ontario. He came to the Kleskun Hill area on June 18, 1919 when he was five years old. His mother who was a widow married Isaac Boyer at that time. There were three girls and three boys in the Delaney family. The family increased by four more children born to the Boyers after this.

Archie went to school in the East Kleskun school. His teacher was Mrs. Jim Storm. After he quit school he worked for different farmers in the neighborhood.

He joined the Army in 1940 and spent several years overseas. We were married in Holland in 1945. He was discharged from the Army in the spring of 1946. I didn't join him until the fall of that year together with our little daughter June who was born after Archie left.



The Delaney's and Boyer's. Taken in 1951.



Left: Clarence Boyer. Middle: Mom Boyer. Right: Archie Delaney.

We spent that first winter with John and Rose Delaney, east of the Kleskun Lake, in a little building they moved up there for that purpose. The next spring, we moved to Tom Smith's farm, which was along the Teepee Creek road. We rented the farm for that summer while the Smiths were visiting at the coast. They offered us the house to live in, but we felt better just moving into an old bunkhouse close by. That summer our twins were born, Eveline and Irene, at Johanna's in Sexsmith.

Archie's mother died in November of 1946, and his stepfather in the spring of 1947.



Left: ?. Middle: Archie Delaney. Right: Johnny DeMaere.

The next winter, we stayed in the Boyer home which now belonged to Clarence, Archie's half brother. Clarence worked in the mill that winter, and we kept Harry, the youngest of the Boyer's, with us.

Through the V.L.A. we bought a ¼ section of land the next spring; the S.W. 13-72-4 W6. The building we moved into wasn't much, but we made the best of it, and Arch pulled a granary up, to add to its size. That part was used for a bedroom for the children, and Arch put up a partition in the other part, giving us another bedroom.

Ray, our youngest child was born in the Grande Prairie Municipal Hospital in March of 1949.

As for entertainment, we visited the neighbours. In summer we picked saskatoons and blueberries. I really enjoyed that — still do.

We attended some of the local weddings. The first one was Henry Diederichs. I remember that occasion very well. Ray was just a toddler at that time. The pop bottles were kept cold in a tub with ice water, and Ray went in head first, trying to get one of the bottles out. Luckily he was rescued right away.

The highway past the house was still gravel at that time. In early spring and muddy times in summer, it was really bad. People used to get stuck out there fairly often. Sometimes in the middle of the night there was a knock on the door and Arch would take the tractor out to get them going again. The Americans used to call it "Hell's 2 miles", the area past our house; at least so I was told.

I remember that Arch used to haul drinking water from Jim Storm's the first year we lived on the farm. He usually used a stoneboat to haul it. The next year Gus Kletke drilled a well just east of the house.

To heat the house, we used coal and wood. At first



Archie Delaney and family. Taken in 1949. L. to R.: June, Ray, Eveline, and Irene.

we had an airtight heater in the kids bedroom, which I always found scary. I was glad when we got rid of that, and got a regular space heater. For lights we used a gas lamp with mantles. We also had a gas lantern to use outside and in the barn.

The first year we didn't have a car, but the bus from Edmonton went right by the house, so that was no problem; or Arch hitch-hiked to town.

The children did not attend a local school, as it was too far to walk. I helped June with correspondence lessons for two years, and the twins one year. In September of 1955, Lyle Kuykendal started picking them up with the school bus, and took them to Grande Prairie.

Arch did the farming in summer, but due to poor crops, he had to go trucking during the winter. He hauled logs from Norton's mill at Sturgeon Heights for Alfred Wales.

After a few years, he bought the quarter of land North of our home quarter, from Jim Storm; the N.W. 13-72-4 W6.

In August of 1954, Arch had a tractor accident on Kleskun Hill. He died of injuries six days later in the Municipal Hospital in Grande Prairie.

The next few weeks are rather vague in my memory. We never had much money, but we were a

Seventeen Tractors Roar Though Fields In Giant Bezanson District Work "Bee"



fleet of tractors roared into action in neighborhood work "bee"

Motorists skimming over the smooth surface of No. 34 Highway, a few miles west of Bezanson, Monday slowed abruptly when they caught a glimpe of the fleet of tractors roaring over the fields of a single farm.

At one stage, seventeen tractors were in action at one time, th growl of their engines making a collective throaty roar in the crisp November air.

These were the neighbors of the late Archie Delaney at work..

In a giant fifteen-hour "bee" that stretched into Tuesday morning, neighboring farmers plowed a hundred acres and tilled another hundred, compressing into a day what would have taken one man more than two weeks.

In a spontaneous gesture of goodwill, the neighbors rallied to the help of Mrs. Delaney and her children to get the fall work on the farm done.

Mr. Delaney was killed in a tractor accident during the summer.

Earlier, Alfred and Charlie Wales and Clarence Boyer had wheeled their combines onto the Delaney farm to take off the crop.

Stage for the "bee" was set over the weekend when Henry Diederich, who has the farm adjoining the Delaney land, toured the district enlisting the neighbors in the project.

Early Monday morning, the first tractors roared into the Delaney yard. They were quickly joined by others. Soon, seventeen tractors were charging across the fields.

One of the volunteers was Ashley Thompson, longtime resident of the district who moved to the coast ten years ago. In the district for a visit, he heard about the "bee," borrowed a tractor and headed for the Delaney farm.

"Just helping out," he said.

Among others "helping out" were: Lester Jobson, Dale Thompson, Julian Jobson, Harvey Bulford, Henry Diederich, Dennis

happy family, and I found it hard to face all the responsibilities by myself.

This is when I really found out how wonderful Archie's family and all our neighbours were. I really didn't know anything about farming, but they just took over. They took off the crop and later in the fall they all came one day to do the fall work. There were approximately twenty tractors at work at one time. One of the neighbours used to come and milk our cow, until we finally let her go dry.

It wasn't only the men that helped either. The ladies arranged it between themselves to have one of them stay with the children and me every night for several weeks. I'm sure that it was difficult for them at times to leave their own families overnight, but somehow every evening, somebody showed up.

Then, during harvest time, when they just couldn't get away, my sister-in-law's mother, "Grandma White" from Clairmont stayed with us for several weeks. When she left, the neighbour ladies faithfully showed up again.

The members of the Legion and again, a lot of the neighbours, helped again the late fall with the building of our house in Grande Prairie, where we moved just before Christmas of 1955.

I was a Registered Nurse in Holland before Archie and I were married, so about a year after we moved, I went back to nursing in the Municipal Hospital here in Grande Prairie.

Until the fall of 1970, we remained living in the house on 109th Avenue, which was built by our neighbours, friends and relatives. By this time, June,



The Home Paper Of The Peace River Country

...ndred Willing Hands Pitch in to Build House for Widow

A hundred willing unpaid hands [illegible] are pushing a home towards completion for the widowed mother of four in the north end of Grande Prairie.

This is the second time in the [illegible] weeks that the East Smoky [illegible] pitched in to [illegible] Delaney, whose [illegible] in a tractor accident on the Bezanson district farm [illegible]. Earlier the [illegible] of nearly two dozen tractors to complete fall work on the farm.

The new home for which initial plans were made by Alvin Delaney and his half-brother, Clarence Boyer, soon stirred the co-operative instincts of the East Smoky group.

Earlier this fall twenty men showed up for the pouring of the [illegible]

[illegible] with the exception of Harry [illegible] a Grande Prairie carpenter, who is supervising the job, and Alvin Delaney.

Though the project was adopted by the Legion it has spread throughout the district to take in almost everyone in the Bezanson area — and beyond it.

John Hall, of Wanham, an old army [illegible] Delaney [illegible] has [illegible] Ray [illegible] ed [illegible] to [illegible] farm.

[illegible] home can [illegible] about the four Delaney children. Ranging in age from four to eight, three of them are in school and had to take the bus in from the farm. This cost money and Mrs. Delaney thought she'd be better off to rent the farm and move into town.

Starting with only a basement [illegible] by noon Wednesday [illegible] rooms, both [illegible] taken on the appearance of a near-complete structure.

All studding was up and outside walls sheathed. Subfloors had been laid, roofing was nearing completion. Mainly only the inside work remained.

If the weather holds, the home [illegible] succeed this fall [illegible] on the job, it's [illegible] time work.

Said one of the volunteers, "We built homes like this before in our time and the Bezanson Hall a... East Smoky Legion were built the... It's a good way to get [illegible] done in a hurry."

Ed Coney, J. Jobson and Morris Stewart lend a hand.

Alvin Delaney, front, and Harry Laye, steer volunteers

Eveline and Irene were married, so Ray was the only one staying at home with me.

June, Mrs. Lloyd Harding, is living in Edmonton; Irene, Mrs. Joe Riou, resides in Red Deer; and Eveline, Mrs. Len Pennington, lives in Grande Prairie. Ray, still single, also lives in Grande Prairie.

In December of 1972 I remarried. My husband, Bill Balmar, and I still reside in Grande Prairie. I quit nursing in February of 1976, and now have more time to enjoy our rather large, combined family of eight children and thirteen grandchildren. The Lord certainly has been good to all of us.

I still remember and very much appreciate the way our friends, relatives and all of the people in the community helped my children and me in our time of need. They are wonderful people, and I would like to say "Thank-you" to all of them.

JOHNNY AND PEARL DeMEARE

Pearl's Mother and Father were — Philip and Annie Chugg.

Johnny's Mother and Father were — Adolph and Flora DeMeare.

We came from Fort McLeod arriving here March 7, 1929.

We rented from Hohn Harris, then bought a half-section on Kleskun Lake Ranch. Then we bought the George Tempest place from Harry Rogers. We rented from Steve Garrett and sold the Tempest place to Floyd Hillerud.

We used sleighs in the winter, Bennett wagons in summer, then progressed to cars. We hauled water from Ashley Thompsons. Our log house was heated by coal and wood and lighted by coal oil and gas lights.

Schools the family attended were East Kleskun, Lindsay High, Grande Prairie High School, and Composit High in Red Deer, and Alberta Bible College in Camrose.

We had two children before we moved from Fort McLeod. Their names were Phillip John, and Geneva Florine. After our arrival to the Kleskun district we had two more children; William Adolf and Melissa Ann. We adopted a girl, Mary Ellen.

Philip married Clarice Wold, of Sexsmith in 1951. They now live in Lethbridge, Alberta. Geneva married Ralph Magee. They live in North Bay, Ontario. Ann married Alex Taylor. They now live in Red Deer. Billy is a minister in Red Deer and is married to Audrey Stanchfield of Tees, Alberta. Mary Ellen is in Calgary, Alberta.

We bought a stationary mobile home and now live in Red Deer in summer months and Yuma, Arizona for the winter months.

THE DIEDERICH FAMILY — by Annie Bulford

My Dad, Michael Diederich was born in Luxembourg on November 15, 1891 and came to Canada in 1915, with his brother Joe, who was born on February 4, 1894.

They docked in New York, March 8, 1915, and travelled to Niagara Falls. Later they came by train from Montreal to Holden, Alberta and worked there for two years. In 1917, they travelled over the Edson Trail to the Peace River country with the Clesse, and Welter families. My folks came with oxen; Clesses with mules, and Welters with horses.

My Dad homesteaded the N.W. 7-72-3 W6th, and Uncle Joe homesteaded the S.E. 13-72-4 W6th.

In the winter of 1918, when the flu was so bad, Dad would walk to the neighbours places to do their chores, if they were sick.

In 1919, Uncle John Diederich, who was born November 23, 1889 accompanied Dad's fiancée, Madelaine Schadeberg to Canada and on November 24 of that year, Mom and Dad were married in the Catholic Church in Grande Prairie by Reverend Father Alphonse Rault. They all lived in a log house on Dad's homestead.

Dad's sister Lidwine came over from Luxembourg in 1920 and stayed with them for awhile. That same year my brother, Marcel was born. He only lived for one week.

It was about this time Uncle John built a log house on his homestead and lived in it until 1938, when with the help of Robert Burrows and later Jack Welter, he built a new house.

On May 12, 1922 I was born, Annie Mary Madelaine. Uncle Joe went about 3 A.M. with a team and buggy to fetch Mrs. Turner who acted as midwife.

In 1923 we all moved into a new and larger house, which Uncle Joe had built on his homestead. Lidwine married Oscar Albinati in Vancouver on April 10 that same year and they returned to the Peace River Country in 1924.

In 1925, my Dad and Uncles Joe, John, and Oscar put up hay on Kleskun Lake. Someone was burning brush and the fire got out of control and burned all but one stack. They hauled it to town with the hopes of selling it to the livery stable in Grande Prairie. They only got enough money from the sale to buy their meal and feed for the horses. That fall they bought a threshing machine. Unfortunately, it snowed on the crop, but they managed to get it by threshing a few hours a day most of that winter.

One incident that can be recalled is when Dad hauled a load of logs with a team of horses. It was 70 degrees below Fahrenheit and Dad froze his ear. He went to put some alcohol on it, but it was frozen too.

Mom was a good seamstress and did beautiful cutwork embroidery. She won first prize at the Fair in Grande Prairie with her embroidery. She also made Alter Cloths for the Bezanson Catholic Church.



Michael Diederich, Annie Diederich, and Madeline Diederich holding Henry Diederich.

In 1927, Mom, Dad and I went to Luxembourg, as Mom wanted to be with her family for the birth of her next baby, and on November 17, my brother, Henry was born.

Mom passed away in April, 1929 and Dad, not being able to farm and care for two youngsters; sent Henry, aged 1½ and myself aged 6½ to St. Augustine's Mission, ten miles out of Peace River. For seven years we attended the Mission, coming home only for the summer holidays.



L. to R.: John Diederich, Germaine Albinati, Michael Diederich, Joe Diederich, Lidwine Albinati, and Oscar Albinati at the Diederich's farm.



L. to R.: Joe Diederich, Mrs. Clesse, Annie Diederich, Joe Clesse, Madeline Diederich holding Henry and John Diederich standing to the right.

During these years, Dad did the cooking and housework in the winter months, while I did it during the holidays. Seeding and harvest times being so busy; a cook was hired. Some of these were Minnie Albu, Louise Calliou, Eva Rusch, Rachelle Brown, and Betty Connelly.

Uncle Joe and Dad owned a threshing machine and threshed for the neighbours in exchange for their help.

In 1936, we finally were able to stay home and attended East Kleskun School. We rode horseback and I sure was a greenhorn, getting bucked off on several occasions. We had to take oats in a sack to feed the horses at noon hour.

I took grades eight and nine there with Mrs. Storm and Miss Hardisty (Mrs. Stan Fenton) as teachers. High school was taken at St. Joseph's in Grande Prairie. While there I boarded at the Academy.

Henry took grades four to eight at East Kleskun and Grade nine at Lindsay High School. He then went trucking and later drove 'Cats for Norton Brothers. He is still employed by Clyde Norton.

Until my Dad passed away in 1952, he was active in the district; organizing Farmers Day Picnics, helping on Sports Day and with Church activities, except for a couple of years when he lived in Kelowna, B.C.

Uncle Joe was secretary of the Hall board and the Telephone Company. He donated the land on which the new Catholic Church is situated.

Uncle John always lived alone on his farm, and after a lengthy illness, passed away in 1958.

On June 25, 1947 I married Harvey Bulford and on June 29, 1950, Henry married Myrtle Sloat of Northmark. They farmed in the Bezanson district with Uncle Joe until 1967, when they sold to Marathon Realty and moved to the Dimsdale area in August, 1968. Uncle Joe lived there also, until his death in the Grande Prairie hospital on July 7, 1970 after a lengthy illness.

Henry and Myrtle have five children:



Mr. and Mrs. Henry Diederich and family. Back row, L. to R.: Donna, Barry, Myrtle, Henry. Front row: Trudy, Clint, Danny.

Danny, born October 1, 1951, is married to the former Maureen Duffy. They live in Wembley with son Shane.

Donna, born June 3, 1954, married Don McNalley of Bezanson. They now reside in Valleyview with their son, Brett.

Trudy, born June 3, 1957; Barry born January 3, 1959; and Clinton born August 12, 1964 are still living at home.

ROBERT AND MYRTLE FENTON

Stan, my brother, and I came to the East Kleskun district in 1927. We farmed together until he moved to Millet, Alberta in 1948.

We were the first ones in the East Kleskun district to raise Black Angus cows.

In 1934 we built a portable grain grinder and saw for cutting fire wood. It was mounted on a sleigh or wagon. We did custom work with it.



Sawing shingle blocks in 1934.



Sawmill and Grinder, built in 1934. Johny DeMaere standing beside it.

In 1936 we bought a tractor (a Rumley), and two grain wagons. We hauled our grain with them; also did custom grain hauling to Clairmont, and Grande Prairie.

We used threshing machines until we bought a combine in 1942. In 1943 we got a hay stacker. It was mounted on the front of the tractor.

We built a cutter in 1937, to use for transportation until we got our first car which was a Model-T-Ford.



Tractor bought in 1936, also grain wagons, used for custom grain hauling.

I was county counsellor in 1936 or 1937. I built a grader, to grade the roads with, then the county bought one.

After Stan and family moved to Millet, Alberta, we moved into their house and sold ours. Bruce and family live there now.

For entertainment we played cards, went to Sturgeon Lake to fish quite often. There were ball games, school picnics, Debolt and Bezanson sports days.

The children went to East Kleskun School until they finished grade 9. They rode their horses in the summer and in the winter they went with the Greko children with their horse and caboose. Later on as the children got older they had their own horse and cutter. When the children finished grade 9, they went to Grande Prairie High School. They stayed at the Wapiti Lodge. We paid $10 a month for their lodging.

We have five children; Alan, Bruce, Ray, Jim, and Muriel.



Taken in 1941. L. to R.: Myrtle holding Bruce, Alan and Bob Fenton.



Station Wagon bought in the 1940's. L. to R.: Bruce, Jim, Ray, and Alan Fenton.



Muriel Fenton.

Alan is married to Betty Robideau. They have four children, two boys and two girls. They are now living in St. Albert, Alberta.

Bruce is married to Helen Parrish. They have two children, one girl, and one boy. They are living on the family farm at Bezanson.

Ray is married to Margie Giles. They have three boys. They are living in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta.

Jim is married to Betty Anne Blythe. They have one boy. They are living in St. Albert, Alberta.

Muriel is living on a quarter section S.W. of Dawson Creek, B.C.

STAN AND MARGARET FENTON

My parents, Alexander and Annie Fenton came to Canada in the fall of 1912, from Southern Ireland. They rented a farm at Wolseley, Saskatchewan, in 1913 and that fall moved to homestead in the Richmound District of South Western Saskatchewan, with my three older brothers. I finished my schooling there and farmed for a few years, then going to Sexsmith in the fall of 1926. We had some good crops in Saskatchewan in 1915, '16, '20, '23, nearly complete failures, in 1914, '18, '24, '25, '26, and fair years, in 1917, '19, '21, '22.

My brothers Art and Bob moved to Sexsmith at the same time. Art rented a farm northeast of Clairmont in 1927, moved into Sexsmith that fall and bought a business. He now lives in the Senior Citizens Homes in Grande Prairie.

Bob and I rented in 1927, and later bought the Bill



Stan and Bob Fenton's farm about 1945.



The fuel supply in 1948. From L. to R.: Terry Fenton, Anne Fenton, Larry Fenton sitting on David Fenton's knee.

Seccombe farm in the East Kleskun District, in 1927. In December, 1948, I sold out to Bob and moved to the Millet District, thirty miles South of Edmonton, where I had bought a farm. I farmed there until 1972, when I sold out and moved into a Senior Citizens High Rise in Edmonton in which my wife and I are very comfortable.



Fenton Brothers house in 1927; built by W. H. Seccombe about 1916.

My sister Mabel Fenton who taught school in Saskatchewan used to come up and spend her summer holidays with Bob and me and do our mending and canning and give us a taste of good cooking. She had to quit teaching in 1936 for health reasons, she made her home with me until 1972 when she died at the age of 91 years.

While at East Kleskun I served as school trustee and Secretary-Treasurer for a number of years and served one year on the Divisional Board. My children attended this school in 1946.

My wife, Margaret Hardisty of Edmonton taught East Kleskun School in 1936 and we got married in 1939. The school was the community center for many years, then the old church on the opposite side of the section was bought by the community for a hall.

Our original home was log, heated by air tight heaters. Then in 1938 we built the frame houses which were heated by hot water and hot air furnaces. They were lighted by wind-chargers and a Delco lighting plant.

We obtained our water from ice storage, dug outs, and a cistern in the basement.

We farmed with horses until 1942 or 1943 and our mode of transportation was by Model T Ford in the summer and horses in the winter. Our cars improved along with the roads.

Our children are: David, Terrance, Anne and Lawrence. David married Lois Cunningham and they have two children; Janet and Barry. They now live in Grande Prairie. Terry married Mirjana Gartenpick, they live in Edmonton. Anne married Bob Russell, they reside in Edmonton, and Larry married Betty Corcoran. They are now living in Calgary.

BILL FITZPATRICK — written by Mr. and Mrs. Bill Fitzpatrick in 1977

My two brothers and I came in over the Edson Trail in the winter of 1913 and filed on my homestead the N.W. 36-72-4-W. 6th.

My brothers had been in, the year before and filed on theirs.

We stayed and put up buildings.

We all went out again in the spring of 1914 to meet our parents and another brother and sister at Edson, who were arriving from Minnesota to join us. We had filed on homesteads for them.

The Edson Trail in our area ran from "Calliou Lake" to the east of us; where there was a "Stopping Place" run by Wm. Calliou, and angling over the Kleskun Hills, southwest of us, to a point on Highway 34 about 1½ miles west of the Kleskun Hills Point of Interest sign, where the first Kleskun Hill Post Office was. It was operated by a man named Brim.

I went out again in the fall of 1916 to Saskatchewan to work in the harvest fields to help with a "Grub Stake" as it was called. Our crops were all frozen that year.



Mr. and Mrs. Bill Fitzpatrick taken December 31, 1976 on their 58th wedding anniversary.



Mr. Bill Fitzpatrick taken on his 85th birthday, February 28, 1976.

We all lived with our parents until we each in turn set up homes of our own. In my case it was December, 1918 when I married Mae Wales, daughter of Alfred and Alice Wales of Glen Leslie, who had arrived from Ontario earlier that year. Alfred Wales had been here several years earlier.

We had five children; two girls and three boys. They were Marguerite, Gertrude, Vernon, Bill, and Jack. They arrived in that order. They all went to East Kleskun School before going to High School in Grande Prairie. East Kleskun School was opened in 1919 with its first teacher whose name was Dorothy Morrison. I served on the school board more than one term. We also boarded several teachers over the years. Later a teacherage was built.

My brother Pat and I bought a Steam Threshing Outfit in the fall of 1918 and threshed far and wide for several years. It took 10 to 12 men to run it so the women had some cooking to do, and on some pretty short notice sometimes, as we moved from place to place.

My brother Jack and I used to play for dances; mostly held in the school, until he moved to Grande Prairie and then it was Mrs. Al Alderman at the piano and I on the fiddle many a time.

For awhile we had dances every Saturday night. They took up a nickel or dime collection to pay for coffee, cream, and sugar. The ladies all brought lunch. Anything left over from the collection the musicians received which wasn't hard to count as I remember, and sometimes didn't need counting. No one had much money but we always had big crowds and good times!

They held impromtu concerts during the lunch hour and usually my brother Phil and I had to "step dance" as our contribution.

The school house was the center of most things; church services, meetings, dances and socials, picnics, card parties, and so on.

I still play the fiddle each day for awhile, for my own amusement.

JACK FITZPATRICK — written by niece Marguerite Laverick, February, 1977

Jack Fitzpatrick filed on the N.E. 36-72-4-West 6 on April 6, 1912.

His brother Pat filed on the S.W. 31-72-3-West 6 at the same time.

They worked that summer with a survey crew in the Fort St. John and Hudson Hope area.

Jack married Mabel Leigh whom he had met in Victoria before coming to the Peace River country. They spent the first few years of their marriage on the homestead in what became the East Kleskun school district.

They had 2 children. A son, Claude and a daughter, Loreen.

After a few years of homesteading, Jack and brother Pat decided to go into the sawmill business. So Jack moved his wife and two children to Grande Prairie.

Several years later Pat passed away and Jack continued on with the sawmill business for many years.

He continued to make his home in Grande Prairie. He and his wife lived in Grande Prairie until they passed on, a good many years ago now.

JOHN GALLAGHER

John (Paddy) Gallagher was born in New Ridgeman, Quebec. He left there about 1900 and went to the coast and to Vancouver. He also worked in Prince Rupert, B.C., before coming to the Peace River Country. He filed on the N.W. 18-72-3-W. 6th on June 4, 1915.

He was very fond of animals and whenever he found one, he would always take it home and feed and look after it. One day he found a skunk and took it home; later it had five baby skunks. A young war bride came over one day and was so fond of those cuddly little skunks, when she left she said to Paddy "Will you save me a setting of eggs?"

Paddy had a dog named "Kernal", a purebred water dog which he had got from some people who had brought him over from England. Paddy and the dog were at the neighbours one afternoon and the kids were playing on a board which they had run out in the slough to get water. One of the kids fell in the water and the other one ran to the house for help. In the meantime, the dog rescued the kid that had fallen in the water. The neighbour offered Paddy a sow and a litter of pigs for the dog, but Paddy wouldn't trade.



Henry Dumas with Paddy Gallagher's dog "Kernal".

One evening Paddy and a neighbour came home from town and saw something standing in the door of his shack. It happened to be his horse; it was looking for sugar. Paddy always fed his horses sugar. The stove was upset, the table was smashed, there was a pile of manure in the middle of the bed, and a 400 pound sow in the cellar.

There were a few murders around the country and in 1918 all the bachelors kept a gun. One night Paddy heard something outside. He looked out and saw a man so he took his gun and shot in the air. The man ran; Paddy reported it to the police and they came and tracked him down as far as the top of a hill. They saw no more tracks so the Police asked Paddy "Where did he go from here." Paddy said, "He was going so fast he must have flew the rest of the way."

One of Paddy's pigs strayed away from home and he never did find out where it went. A couple bachelor neighbours had butchered it. Paddy was at their place one day, so they invited him in for dinner. The bachelor's little nephew came so he was there for dinner too, but he didn't know who Paddy was. They had fried pork for dinner and there was one piece left on the plate. One of the bachelors passed it to the kid and said "Here clean up the rest of the meat". The kid took it and said, "Well here goes the last of Gallagher's pig."

Paddy sold his farm and bought a share in a livery barn in Grande Prairie. In his later years he moved to Flin Flon, Manitoba. He passed away at the Brandon Hospital in Manitoba.

THOMAS GILLESPIE FAMILY

My wife, Eura (Cox) and I started farming in Manitoba, but in a very short time the so-called "dirty thirties" hit us and we soon lost all we had made. Being in touch with my brother-in-law Roy Ames at Bezanson, decided in the spring of 1937 to pack up what we had, and move to Grande Prairie. I went ahead with the train car-load of four horses, five cows, and the machinery and household items. On arriving I left the cattle in a pasture at Jack Dorcheid's, and then went on to Roy Ames', where I stayed for awhile, and helped put in his crop. Then we moved to the farm that I had rented; a quarter section known as the "Clesse" place. My wife, and the children; Meryl, Iowne, Elva, Betty, and Mac arrived just as we were finishing the seeding. The crop was light, but by working on the Bill Ferris' and Ed Leslies' threshing gangs we had enough to see us through the winter.

The children; Meryl, Iowne and Elva attended East Kleskun school, taught there by Miss Luella P. Phillips. The children walked to school in the summer months and drove themselves in the winter time by a team and sleigh. They recall driving home from school with the sleigh on nice chinook days, they and other children would be towed behind on their skis, which was great fun.

From there we moved to the Johnny Boychuck's farm in the spring of 1938. This was a half-section located just north of Cameron's farm and again we had



Mrs. Thomas (Eura) Gillespie and their children: Meryl, Iowne, Elva, Betty, and Mac in front of their home on the Clesse farm.

little or no crop. We got a little income by cutting, for 60c an acre Jim Evans' wheat crop. He was the manager of Buffalo Lakes Lumber Company. This was a quarter section of land just east of Kleskun Hill School. I took some provisions and stayed there at nights, sleeping in the wagon box and tying the horses to a feed manger.

The children still attended East Kleskun School. They drove to school through the hills. In winter they drove "Old Dan" on the stoneboat. A rope was attached to the back of the stoneboat, so that they could hold the stoneboat back off the heels of Old Dan, while going down the hills.

Our post office was Kleskun Hill.

We appreciated the generous hospitality of all the neighbours and relatives who so willingly came to our assistance when needed during our stay there. We enjoyed the community life immensely.

However in the spring of 1939, we decided to go back to Manitoba, to the farm that Bill Ford left, when he went out to Bezanson. We did very well from then on except I lost my wife in 1973. I am now retired and living at 826-10th St. Brandon, Manitoba.

WILLIAM AND ANNIE GINTER

My parents, William Carlton Ginter and Annie Mary Beatty Ginter arrived in Edmonton on April 19th, 1906. Dad and an uncle of mine had come to Canada, to Edmonton, in 1905 to see the possibilities of drilling for oil in Alberta. Dad had been working for Standard Oil In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania previous to this but decided he wanted to come west. After deciding that the oil potential was good in Alberta he came back to Olean, N.Y. for the family and moved them to Alberta. They were Mother, my sister Mabel Irene, who later became Mrs. Glenn Secrest, brother Wilbert Llellewen and Earl Waldo. I was the only one born in Edmonton. They came by train and crossed into Canada at Fort Erie. The train just came as far as the Strathcona station at that time and they came by Tallyho across the bridge to the old Fort Edmonton Hotel. This was run by a Don Ross at that time.

My Dad drilled the first well in Tofield but it turned out to be gas instead of oil so he lit the streets of Tofield with gas. There used to be a picture of him in the Fire Hall in Tofield. While working at Tofield he suffered a stroke and passed away when I was three years old. We all got our schooling in Edmonton.

Wilbert Ginter, more commonly known as "Duke", was married in 1915 to Eunice Brox. Their daughter Marguerite was born in Edmonton on January 11th, 1916. He joined the Army in the First World War and went overseas.

In 1930 he married Amanda Heintz and soon after they went to live on a farm just North of the Secrest place. It wasn't Duke's first trip up there as he used to go up from Edmonton and help Glenn put in the crop and also he took one of Glenn's teams threshing. He and his wife Mandy had no family. They moved back to Edmonton after a few years and Duke joined the Army again in the Veteran's Guard. Mandy passed away in 1968 and Duke is now residing in a lovely new Lodge in Edmonton having just moved there from one of the Senior Citizen Units.

My brother Earl Waldo, known as Bud or Buck, lived in the East Kleskun area for a short time. Their second boy passed away in infancy and their third boy, Roy, now living in Edmonton, was one of Grandma Turner's babies. Roy was in the Navy in the Second World War and his brother Waldo, the oldest, was in the Army. Waldo was killed soon after his discharge from the Army. Roy has three boys and one girl. Bud and Romie and the two boys moved back to Edmonton after living in the East Kleskun area for a short time. Bud went to work for the Alberta Government until his retirement. He passed away in 1970.

I, Hazel Foore, received my schooling in Edmonton at the Alex Taylor School but in the 1920s, I went to the Peace River Country to live with my sister, Mrs. Secrest, and finished my Grade VIII and IX at the East Kleskun School. Finally accompanied Mrs. James Storm, the teacher at East Kleskun to the Turner School (I believe it was actually the Kleskun Lake School but it was called the Turner School) where I batched with Mrs. Storm and took my Grade X, then I came to Edmonton and took a year Commer-



Taken at the Smoky in 1920. Mr. and Mrs. Jack Fitzpatrick and Claude and Lorraine, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Fitzpatrick and Margurite, Mrs. Alderman (the first one), Mr. and Mrs. Secrest and Hazel Ginter.

cial at the McDougall Commercial High School. When this was completed I went back to Grande Prairie and went to work with the Dominion Lands Office. I boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Jack Fitzpatrick in Grande Prairie. While working for the Dominion Lands, I met Stettler Foore from Sexsmith. Stet's parents had arrived in Alberta around 1904, I believe, and Stet was the first white baby boy born in Stettler, Alberta, where they resided for some time.

Stet and I were married in Grande Prairie and went farming west of Sexsmith. Our daughter, Vivian, was born in Sexsmith and when Vivian was a few months old we took a homestead in what is now known as the Fitzsimmons district. Our son Donald was born in the old Grande Prairie Municipal Hospital and that twenty-three mile journey was made in a real rush having to be made by team and cutter. Stet always had fast horses and we were very glad of this that night — January 5th. It was the coldest day in the winter when Stet took me in and the same when he brought me home all wrapped up in blankets with a hot rock at my feet. You had to be tough in those days. Both of the children got their academic schooling at the Fitzsimmons school and then went on to the Grande Prairie High School to further it. Vivian was working in the Treasury Branch and Don boarded with her while going to school.

Vivian and her husband, Len Hellerud, now have an acreage west of Calgary and she follows in her Father's footsteps being a great lover of horses. They have a number of horses on the acreage. She and Len have a daughter Valerie and a son Ronald.

Don and his wife Donna have three girls, they also live on an acreage west of Calgary and have horses too, but Don follows in his Granddad Ginter's footsteps as he's been in the oil business for years. He started up North as a surveyor. His wife, Donna, is in the Real Estate business in Calgary. One of their daughters works in Edmonton and the other two girls are still going to school in Cochrane, Alberta.

THE GRAY FAMILY — written by George and Martha

My folks, the Gray family, arrived in Grande Prairie in June, 1919.

They moved to the Kleskun Hill district, on my grandfather's (MacGray's) homestead, which was N.W. quarter of 25-72-4-W6. He passed away in 1921.

My folks came from Edmonton, Alberta. My father shipped his stock, machinery, household goods on the freight train. It took him two weeks from Edmonton to Grande Prairie.

My mother and the children came on the passenger train. There were five children; Clara, George, Jack, Jim and Wilf.

My mother was a midwife.

Our closest neighbours, "the early settlers," were Mike Ministryski, John Matyczuk, Pete, and John Babnick, John, Bill, and Phil Fitzpatrick, Isaac Boyer, Delaneys, Al Alderman, Henry Calliou, Joe Swift, Mr. and Mrs. Orr, and Jack Luptin.

We all went to the East Kleskun School. Jim Storm was our school teacher.

My father farmed at Kleskun Hill from 1919 to 1946. We sold the farm, had a sale, then moved to Grande Prairie till my Father and Mother passed away.

WASYL GRIKO

Wasyl was born in Krasna, Sustra, in the year 1886, on December 28. He was not literate as he did not have any schooling. At the age of 16 he worked for a wealthy land owner in Romania. When he left the job in Romania, he went to work in Germany. While there he was Conscripted to serve his time in the Army. He was with the ninth regiment and helped load cannons and served for one year. After serving his time, he returned to Germany with his brother, Henry, to work. From Germany he and his brother came to Canada, in 1906. He worked in the Chevrolet Factory, in Oshawa, Ontario, for Errot Company. While they were working for this company, Henry turned 21, and got conscripted to serve his time in the Austrian Army. Henry went back to Sutra and Wasyl was left by himself.

Then he started his journey to the Prairies. He took the train to Edmonton; from Edmonton to Fort George he walked. He arrived in Fort George in 1912. Here he met some friends. He worked for a contractor fixing Electric light lamps. At this time there still was no railway from Edmonton. He met Paul Podulsky, who at this time was working for the Railway. He also met John Kebalow, who was the Barn Boss for the same Electrical Contractor.

In 1914, when land was opened up to the homesteaders, he homesteaded in the Kleskun Lake Area. He spent some time on the land, building a cabin and clearing brush. When the railway began to lay the rails from Edmonton to Grande Prairie, he went to work for the Railroad. He worked for the Railway till 1927, then he went back to his homestead to farm the land.

In 1929 he married Margaret Gashuk, and from this time till the day he died he lived on the farm.

AUGUST HATT

August homestead the S.E. 18-72-3-W6 in 1918.

THE CLARENCE HOWE STORY

Coming from the O'Molley district, southwest of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, in the fall of 1951, we first lived on the John Pollock farm.

June, our only child at that time, attended school at Somme. Murray was born in the fall of 1953, and when he was a month old, we moved to the Clarence Boyer place. June went to school at East Kleskun for five years and started high school in Sexsmith. Carol was born in 1956 and when she was two years old we moved to the Beaverlodge district, where I still farm.

Amy, my wife has taught in the Beaverlodge Elementary School for the past fifteen years.

June finished her high school in Beaverlodge, took a Business Course in Grande Prairie and is working for a Chartered Accounting firm in Calgary.

Murray took all his schooling in Beaverlodge, one year of college in Grande Prairie, and is working as a technician at the Research Station at Beaverlodge. He also farms.

Carol took her schooling in Beaverlodge, and is now in her third year of Education in the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

JACK HUNTER

Jack Hunter was born in Scotland and he was a stonemason by trade. Jack worked in Lanigan, Saskatchewan before coming to the Peace River Country. He filed on the S.W. 18-72-3-W. 6th. He was a bachelor all his life. He passed away on October 8, 1944.



Jack Hunter taken in Lannigan, Sask.

HAZEL AND LESTER JOBSON

Lester Cornelius Jobson arrived in the Bezanson area in the early 1930's working as a hired man and on threshing outfits in the district for several years. Following his discharge from the Canadian Army in 1946 he and his wife Hazel took up land under the Veteran's Land Act in the East Kleskun district purchasing the S.½ 14-72-4-W6th at Glen Leslie corner from Mrs. Turner and commenced farming in the spring of 1947. Each succeeding year saw more acres cleared of bush until almost all of the half-section was under cultivation. They sold out to Albert Klimach in 1965 and moved to Grande Prairie and later to Salmon Arm, B.C. Their son, Allen, born in 1947, first attended Harry Balfour School until the large centralized school at Bezanson was opened and vanning to Bezanson was possible. He then went to Grande Prairie for High School and from there to the University of Alberta.



Lester and Hazel Jobson and Mrs. Sandy Storm on left. Taken in 1956.

JOHN LUNDSTROM

He homesteaded the N.E. 19-72-3-W6.

JACK LUPTON

Jack Lupton homesteaded in the Bezanson area in 1919. He filed on a homestead, the N.E. of 30-71-2-W6th on October 1, 1913. His brother filed on the N.W. quarter.

Jack and his brother Charlie, and the Colbys came into the country together in 1913. He took a second homestead in the early thirties, on the east side of Kleskun Hill where he made his home. He remained a bachelor.

It was said that Jack had been a tough character in his younger days. When he entered a bar he had only to give one of his mighty yells and dead silence resulted.

Lawrence and Dorothy Cowell's family were one of his neighbours. When they knew Jack, he had mellowed a great deal, but was still occasionally angry at a neighbour. It was at one of these rare times that



Jack Lupton in the year of 1947 at 73 years of age.

their two little girls were very frightened. They often ran across the pasture to visit Jack, where they were assured of a warm welcome and treats as well. On this day, they came home crying. "Jack is having a terrible fight with someone. He is yelling and they are throwing things at each other". As it became clear later Jack was mad at a neighbour and when all alone was rehearsing what he planned to say when he saw him. At the same time, as he talked out his anger, he cleaned out his house, hurling tin cans and other things out the door.

In a short while he was calm and cheerful again and the girls were delighted to find him safe and well.

The children could do no wrong in Jack's eyes, nor could they be dirty. One evening as Dorothy prepared supper, Jack played with the baby. She was barefoot and he began holding her up to walk the length of the table, stepping on the plates, silver or whatever was there. When I objected on grounds of sanitation Jack exclaimed, "Those little feet can't be dirty!"

He often entertained the children with stories. One was about the "Gilly-go-loo bird that flies backward." It doesn't care where it's going, but wants to know where it has been".

We remember him with amusement and affection.

Jack passed away at his home on July 14, 1948 at the age of 74 years.

FRANK MATHE' — written by Marguerite Laverick

Frank Mathe' homesteaded the N.E. 32-72-3 about 1914.

He proved up his homestead and through the years broke about 80 acres. He really loved his horses and treated them with kindness. He lived a bachelor's life.

Frank always made wine. One day he threw the saskatoons out, that he had made his wine from, the chickens happened to eat them. "I didn't know what was the matter with them damn 'tings," he said. Then he realized they were drunk.

He continued to live on his homestead until he passed away about 1939.

JOHN MATYCHUCK

S.E.¼ 25-72-4-W6th. He homesteaded this quarter.

DAN McGILLIS — written by Marguerite Laverick

Dan McGillis homesteaded the S.W. 36-72-4, in the early days, 1915 or 1916.

He was a young single man at that time.

He proved up his homestead. He lived there for about 10 years.

Bill Fitzpatrick bought the quarter of land and farmed it for many years. He later sold it and his own homestead. N.W. 36-72-4 to the C.P.R.

MIKE MINISTRYSKI

He homesteaded the N.E. 24-72-4-W6.

JACK MOLLEY

Jack homesteaded the N.W.¼ 16-72-3-W6th in 1915. Jack died in Terrace, B.C. in 1935.

JULES NATAISSE

Jules came from Paris, France. He homesteaded the W.¼ 24-72-4-W6.

RENE AND AGATHA OE SR.

It was about the middle of September, 1919 that my parents, Rene and Agatha Oe, decided to come to Canada, with their three children Rene Jr., Victor, and Lillian. We left Luxembourg, by train, for Cherbourg, France. There we got on a boat called "Hudson". We travelled on this boat for about twelve days until we docked in the harbor of Quebec City, Quebec. The weather was well below zero and there was quite a bit of snow in Quebec.

After resting there about three days, Dad bought tickets for the Peace River Country. We travelled by train, arriving in Grande Prairie about October 19, 1919. The winter came early that year. Grande Prairie had a new immigration hall. It was at this place that we were welcomed to stay.

Before leaving Luxembourg, Dad had been corresponding with a farmer in the Kleskun Hill district. His name was Joe Diederich, and he came to meet us in Grande Prairie when we arrived.

In 1920 Victor, Lillian and I were of school age, so we went back to school. We attended East Kleskun School and our first teacher was Dorothy Morrison. The next teacher was Mrs. Storm. I, being the oldest, had attended school in Luxembourg and my grade was equivalent to about nine or ten here, according to my teacher Mrs. Storm.

Joe told us about some land for sale about two miles from his home. Dad bought it the S.E. 19-72-3-W6th, and this became our happy home. In 1922 he homesteaded S.W. 30-72-3-W6th, but after farming it a few years, sold it to William Wager.

In 1920, Dad went to work in Grande Prairie for Charlie Stredulinsky, who owned a tailor shop. After working for Charlie a period of seven years, he opened up his own shop. It was located on main street next to where the Royal Cafe now stands.

My father, being a tailor by trade, didn't understand very much about farming. My brother, Victor, and I were quite young, but we went out and worked with the neighbors, which helped us a lot. After several years, Dad bought some horses and machinery. We then started farming on our own. Victor went to work for a farmer in Sexsmith. During the depression in the thirties, when work was hard to find, he worked at any job that was available. In 1940 he went to Calgary. There he got a job at Canadian Pacific Railway station. Later he purchased his own home there. He worked at C.P.R. until he passed away in May, 1967. He is buried in the family plot in the Glen Leslie cemetery.

In June, 1930 my father retired and moved back to the farm. He was born in Luxembourg in 1864 and at the age of 70, in 1934, he passed away. He is buried in Glen Leslie cemetery. Agatha was born in February, 1888 and passed away on September 16, and is also buried in Glen Leslie cemetery.

RENE AND ANNIE OE — written by Annie Oe

I was born in Valley River, Manitoba on January 25, 1913. I came to Bezanson district with my parents, Michael and Ksenia Hawryluk in 1917.

My memories of those days are of the trail that ran past our cabin, and of the Indians passing by once in a

while. Whenever my sister and I heard the dogs barking we always ran for the house. We were scared of the dogs. Another thing we were scared of was Joe Beatty's cattle. He had a bull that chased. Whenever we were sent to the garden for vegetables we made sure that the coast was clear.

When my parents went out to clear land for breaking they took us with them. We found these days sometimes long and tiresome.

When Lindsay school opened in 1920, I ran into difficulties. I couldn't speak English. The teacher didn't understand me but I soon learned. Things I found most interesting at school were colored pegs we used for counting. They were just the thing, I thought. Such beautiful colors! I think the reason was that we never had any store bought toys at home. Mother made us rag dolls and dad made us our rolling pins. Sometimes my grandfather carved us wooden toys. My first Christmas gift was during my third year of school when the teacher put on a Christmas concert and we got a bag of peanuts and candy as a gift from Santa.

Being Greek Orthodox, we celebrated our Christmas on January 7, and our biggest thrill of Christmas was Christmas Eve on January 6th. We had a twelve course meal. The best part, that I liked was the straw spread on the floor and a peanut and candy scramble after the meal. Our Easter was highlighted by decorated chicken eggs, which we exchanged with our cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents.

I only attended school to grade seven. At that time my mother had an operation and was a long time recovering from it. Although the work was hard, I enjoyed it and was glad to help my parents. My dream was to get an education and become a nurse, but I can't say that I regret not doing so.

As years went by there were more settlers. We attended Sunday school, church services and dances and picnics at Lindsay School. Sometimes we went to other school dances or parties at some of the neighbor's homes.

It was at one of these dances Rene and I met. We were married in October, 1933. At that time Rene was farming his parent's farm and renting (N.E. 19-72-3-W6th) where we are living now. We bought this land in 1934 from John Lundstrom who had homesteaded it. There was only about thirty-five acres broken on this land.

That winter, in 1933, my husband Rene and my dad got a contract from Pat and Jack Fitzpatrick to do logging on shares. For the next three winters they worked at Fitzpatrick's mill in the bush to get material for our buildings. During this time I stayed with my parents in the winter and his parents in the summer.

In the fall of 1936 we moved into our very own house, such as it was. We had four walls, a roof, no ceiling and just one big room. We had three dollars and fifty cents and twenty-five acres of crop out in the field. Our light was a small coal oil lamp. It wasn't too bright but gave enough light to keep us from bumping into each other if we had to cross the room. Our heat was only a cook stove at first but later that fall we got an air tight heater. A couple of days after we moved



Rene and Annie Oe's children off to school on horse named Jack. In front: Gale, Ralph, Donald, Gerald and Doris.

into our house Rene got a job threshing with Bill Ferris.

We had two children then; a son Ralph, two years old and a daughter Doris, five months. Rene's brother, Victor, and my brother Peter came over and helped nail the ceiling on. At the same time Doris was very sick. She had the red measles. How she ever slept through that pounding, I will never know. We then had more heat and it made the house more comfortable.

For water, Rene dug a well and hauled water from a slough in the school section a mile away. I melted snow in the winter for the house and in the summer we also hauled water from his mother's well. The following summer he dug a dam.

In 1938 he hired some Indians to brush and made a deal with Mr. Alderman to break it and he could have the first crop. In the forties he hired a cat to do some more brushing and Frank Kochalyk did the breaking.



Rene and Annie Oe family. Back row from left: Gerald, Doris, Ralph and Donald. Front row: Annie, Gale, and Rene.

There were three more children born by 1942. The oldest, being eight years old had a few light chores to attend to. When the Second World War broke out everything started improving. The bridge over the Smoky River was being constructed. We raised cattle and quite a few hogs at the time, so we sold pork and beef to the cook. This brought us a better price. This was working towards a down payment on our first tractor, which was purchased in 1949. Then other machinery was replaced. Some was remodelled so it could be used with the tractor. A cat was hired about this time to dig us a new dam.

Power was installed in the fifties and we went to a bit of modern living. We found the lights hard on the eyes at first but it did beat filling lamps every night. The fridge was also very much appreciated and saved a lot of steps to the well and back for milk and cream. The electric stove is also very nice, especially in hot summer days, but I will admit the old wood stoves are still missed on cold winter days.

Our children are now all married and on their own. Ralph is married to June Anderson. He took a trade in mechanics and worked in a garage for several years, but preferred farming and is now farming in the Wembley district. They have two children, Marlene and Ronald. Gerald is married to Lynne Bulford and is farming here in Bezanson. Donald also took a trade in mechanics. He is part owner in a garage in Prince Rupert, B.C. He married Beverly May and they have two sons, William and David.

GALE OE — JOHNSON

I, Gale Oe, was fifth and last child born to Rene and Annie Oe, May 18, 1942. My memories of Bezanson as I was growing up have to be the happiest. I rode horse back to East Kleskun School for nine years and helped harvesting each fall. Riding the binder, driving the tractor, stooking, shovelling grain, feeding pigs and milking cows were all good satisfying jobs for all of us. I remember cold winter mornings when one couldn't see out of the windows for frost. One of my winter-time chores was filling the wood box. I remember when we got electricity. Now we each had our own light. I appreciate all of this and feel richer by far for having experienced this country living and would never want to have been born and raised anywhere else or at any other time.

I married Vernon Johnson in 1963 and our home is in Kaleden, B.C. We have a daughter Leslie.

DORIS OE — GUERETTE

I, Doris, was second child of five, born to Rene and Annie Oe on July 21, 1936. I grew up on the family farm near Bezanson and attended East Kleskun School, 1½ miles from home. Transportation to school was by horseback or by horse and sleigh in the winter months. The school consisted of one room and one teacher who taught approximately 25 to 35 children from grades one to nine. It was heated by a wood stove and lit by sunlight or kerosene lamp. A barn on the school yard provided shelter for the horses. The teacher lived in a small house, also on the school grounds.

The family home was heated with wood stoves and lit with kerosene lamps. We never had running water or electricity. Radios were operated on 12 volt batteries, and our sources of water were wells and dams.

The most memorable times of my childhood were during harvest. My father and one of my brothers or mother, when my brothers were in school, would operate the tractor and binder to cut the grain. My mother, and the rest of the family who were strong enough, would do the stooking. Being a child, it was more fun to play hide and seek in the stooks. After the bundles were dry, groups of neighbors would get together and help each other with the threshing, doing one farm then moving on to the next. Bundles were hauled to the machine by horse drawn wagons and hayracks and manually fed into the machine. It was very important that the men get an early start in the morning. They were ready to work by the time the dew dried enough. I loved lying in bed smelling the breakfast cooking downstairs about 5 a.m. It was also very nice because I knew that the house would be warm by the time we got up. In the cool weather my parents would get up early just to light the fire, as it took awhile for the house to warm up.

I later attended Grande Prairie High School for grades 10, 11 and 12. For this I had to stay at the Wapiti Lodge Dormitory as there wasn't any means of transportation from home. Here in the city it seemed like living in luxury; we had power, water and telephone.

After high school I joined the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps and spent one year in Camp Borden and Kingston, Ontario, where I went to school and received my registered nursing assistant certificate. I was then posted to the Military Hospital in Whitehorse, Yukon Territories, where I spent 1½ years. Here I met Joe Guerette, whom I later married. We lived in many different locations; Whitehorse, then Wainwright, Alberta; Grande Prairie, Alberta; Prince Rupert, B.C.; and finally Montreal, Quebec, near the home of Joe's family.

We have four children: Alan, born 1960, Gary, born in 1962, Debbie, born in 1964 and Janice, born in 1965.

Of all the travelling and different homes we had, the farm house in the country near Bezanson will always have a warm place in my heart. I hope some day we can move back to the content, peaceful, quiet of the country and let our children experience the beauty of what nature has to offer.

OE — LIL AND ALEX ROBIDEAU AND FAMILY
ALEX AND LIL ROBIDEAU — by Rodger Black

Alex was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota on October 10, 1908. He lived in Bemidji, Minn., until 1917, when with his parents, Peter and Sophia and other members of the family, they emigrated to Canada. The family travelled by train, shipping a carload of settlers effects along with them and as Alex recalled, the journey took approximately two weeks. They arrived in Grande Prairie in early April and settled on land east of Bezanson on the S.E. 13-72-3-W6th which Peter had homesteaded on an earlier trip into the north.

Alex attended the Lindsay school, but left the classroom and books behind at an early age to work in

the outdoors and help out on the farm, which he much preferred to sitting behind a school desk. Besides helping on his parents land he worked for various other farmers in the area, also across the Smokey for a Mr. George Debolt, whose farm was located at the present site of the Hamlet of Debolt.

While working in the Debolt area, Alex filed on a homestead in the Goodwin district, just east of the Smoky. However, after doing some clearing and cutting fenceposts one winter, Alex decided homesteading was not for him, and disposed of the quarter section. He then moved back to the Bezanson, Kleskun area and worked on the Fenton Brothers farm.

It was during this period, when attending one of the many community dances, that Alex met Lily Oe.

Lily Oe was the daughter of Rene and Agatha Oe and was born on February 4, 1914 at Esche, Luxembourg in Europe. She came with her parents and two older brothers, Rene and Victor to Grande Prairie in the fall of 1919. Lily attended the East Kleskun school, which was located two miles north west of the farm.

While attending school, Lil like all children of pioneer families, assisted with the various household and farm duties and has many a fond memory of the happy and carefree days during those early years. After completing her schooling Lil stayed on at home, working around the neighborhood, assisting various new mothers with their housework and helping look after the young children.

Lil met Alex Robideau around 1930 and their courtship ended in marriage on October 19, 1932 as the Grande Prairie Northern Tribune announced.

The newly weds first home was a log house located on brother Rene Oe's farm the N.E. 19-72-3-W6th. After residing there for two years they moved onto the original Oe farmstead one mile south.

During this period Alex helped work the family farm and also purchased the N.W. 17-72-3-W6th, but sold it a couple of years later to Podulsky's.

As both money and work were hard to come by in the so called "Dirty Thirties" or Depression Days, Alex decided to try something which he felt was needed in the community. Thus he started a small business of custom grain grinding and wood sawing for the farmers and residents of the area. As Alex once said "I think we must have cut thousands of cords of firewood every fall", to supply the household needs for the long winters."

In 1940 Alex, Lil and family, which now included three children moved to the north Glen Leslie area where they rented the Turner place, which was the S.E. 14-72-4-W6th. During this period Alex farmed some and also was employed part time by the Fenton Brothers driving a truck hauling lumber and grain.

However, when the Alaska Highway construction started, Alex went to Dawson Creek along with a number of others from the community where he helped haul materials and supplies for the U.S. army. In 1942 when Alex obtained a house in Dawson Creek, Lil and family moved there to be with him.

While at Dawson Creek Alex purchased a truck from Ralph Norton which was the start of a Trucking Business that he operated for twenty years. He hauled freight up the Alaska Highway until the war ended. He often spoke of the many convoys and long trips that used to involve several days or weeks up the highway, away from Dawson Creek.



L. to R.: Alex Robideau, John Diederich, Vic Oe, George Czupryk, Rene Oe and Jack Hunter.

In the fall of 1945 after the war's end, with little hauling work available at Dawson Creek, Alex and Lil decided to move back to Alberta and did so just prior to winter. They bought property in Grande Prairie on 197th Ave. where they resided until January of 1963. Alex remained in the trucking business hauling everything from lumber and gravel to oil field and heavy equipment throughout northern Alberta and British Columbia.

Lil raised the family and found time to work at a number of jobs around town, such as operating a boarding house working at the Donald Hotel, selling Avon Products, and clerking in a grocery store. She liked the grocery store work so well that it eventually led to her and Alex purchasing the Avondale Grocery in Grande Prairie in December of 1962.

Alex sold out his trucking operations at this time and they moved to the suite above the store. Lil and Alex operated the store together and expanded the business until the fall of 1974 when Alex became ill.

After entering hospital in Grande Prairie it was discovered that Alex had terminal cancer of the stomach. He spent most of the next nine months in hospitals in Edmonton and Grande Prairie and passed away at Grande Prairie on July 26, 1975 at the age of 66.

Lil still operates the Avondale Grocery and resides where she and Alex had made their home since 1963.

Alex and Lil's family numbered five children, nineteen grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Their children are as follows:

Ruth married Rodger Black and lives in Grande Prairie.

Frank lived at Valleyview until his sudden passing of a heart attack at the age of 39 on March 22, 1974.

Doreen married Frank Turner and resides in Grande Prairie.

Marvin lived at Prince George, B.C. and passed away at the age of 28 on March 17, 1969 as the result of a logging truck accident.

Alex Jr. married Ev Yelenik and resides at Valleyview.

JOHN ORDWAY

John homesteaded the N.W. 14-72-4-W6.

FRANK ORR

Frank Orr came in with John Parrent, and filed on the N.W. 13-72-4-W6. He was only here for seven or eight years, then went back to Nova Scotia. Frank and John ran a poolroom on the Grand Trunk and then in Grande Prairie.

JOHN AND EMILY PINSCH

In 1928, I came to Canada, from Germany on a boat called Karlsrue. I landed in Halifax and came by train to Edmonton. I worked one summer in Nisque, Alberta, near Edmonton, cutting brush. In the fall of the same year I worked in Gleichen, at harvest time. The next summer, in 1929, I worked in Saskatchewan for a contractor, driving a dump truck. In 1930, I returned to Edmonton and then in 1931, I came to the Peace River Country, by train to Sexsmith. I bought a homestead four miles north of Teepee Creek in 1931. The homestead was rented to Harold Cole, and I rented a half-section of land for three years from Tommy Organ. I also rented a half-section from the Soldiers Settlement Board (VLA) for three years, then bought it. I farmed there until 1945, then sold it to Paul Shau. In 1944, I bought the S.E. 25-72-4-W6th from Bill Wager in the East Kleskun district.

My first vehicle was a three ton truck, which was bought in 1937, and our first car was bought in 1951. Before that, transportation was on foot.

I farmed with eight horses, until I got a John Deere tractor in 1939. I grew mostly wheat and oats, and raised cattle and pigs and a few sheep.

In 1949, I married Emily Klimach in Grande Prairie.

We lived in a frame house, heated by coal and wood and lighted by coal oil lamps, which was situated on the above mentioned quarter, until 1960. In 1956, we moved a school house from Webster onto the S.E. 26-72-4-W6th, the quarter I had purchased from Leslie Burrows in 1955. After many renovations, installing the electricity and furnace, we made that our happy home in 1960, when we moved into it.

Emily spun her own wool; with which she knit the family socks and mitts. She would save all her goose and duck feathers; and to help pass the winters, she would strip each feather one by one (with a knife she would peel the feathers off the quill). Then she would make feather pillows and feather quilts.

In 1950, our first child, Christina was born, and in 1951 our other child, Johny was born. Christina attended school at East Kleskun one year; then they both attended Bezanson and Sexsmith High School for the remainder of their schooling.

Christina attended the University of Alberta and trained as a nurse. She is now nursing in the Grande Prairie Hospital. Johny is presently employed at Proctor and Gamble in Grande Prairie.

PAUL AND MARY PODULSKY

Paul came from Melnetsa, Austria; now the Ukraine. He came by ship to Canada in 1908 and took a homestead in 1915, the S.W. 20-72-3-W6th. Paul married Mary Struhan in 1923.



Paul Podulsky's family, 1950. Back row, L. to R.: Caroline, Tony, Stanley, Barbara, Mary, Myron, Paul, Velma, Alex, George, Paul Jr., and Mary Ann.

Times were not so good when we were married but we managed to live through it all. Mrs. Bessie Thompson was very nice to me and she was always giving good advice and when she was going by to the post office at Tempests, she would pick me up. We also went picking saskatoons together on Kleskun Hill. Mrs. Thompson had a buggy and a horse. She had two little boys not yet in school. They were Ross and Dale. Two years later our first baby was born. Mrs. Agatha Oe was midwife and Mrs. Thompson came to help.

We farmed with horses for many years. One day we got a letter from Paul's family overseas saying that his brother Stanley passed away as a result of being in the First World War. He was in a prison in Sicily, Italy, and when he was released and came home he had chest complications. The letter went on to say that everything was alright at home but he, Nick, would like to come to Canada, to see his brother Paul. (This was Paul's youngest brother.) We had a good heavy crop of wheat and all the rest of the crop looked good. We also had a small herd of cattle. So Paul sold some cattle to Mr. Moody of Sexsmith, which brought enough for train and boat tickets and some spending money. This was sent to Nick. Sometime later a salesman came driving up with a Willis Overland touring car he had for sale. He took Paul for a ride down a road which was just a wagon trail. This man wanted to show off how fast this car could go. Paul said the dust was flying and the car was bumping and it seemed like the car was going on a gallop. We paid him $25.00. He seemed glad to get the money and glad to get rid of the car. That same summer we were notified that Nick was coming from the old country. We went to meet the train in the car, and just as we were pulling into Clairmont the train pulled out of the station. We turned around and went speeding down the road to Grande Prairie, but the train had already left for Dawson Creek when we got there. When Nick had got off the train, there was a taxi waiting and somehow he got the understanding that Nick was to go to his brother Paul's. Of course he was delivered to our house on the farm while we were busy looking for him up and down the streets in Grande Prairie. When we got home there he was waiting for us, and on top of it all, we had the taxi bill to pay. He lived with us for a few years and

passed away in 1932 at the age of 26, at the Grande Prairie Municipal Hospital.

In the winters Paul worked in the sawmills and I was at home with the children, doing chores and sending them to school. Before he went to the job, in the fall, he would take a sleigh load of wheat to the Sexsmith flour mill and get a year's supply of flour ground. There were white wheatlets — porridge, bran, shorts, first grade flour and second grade flour. One fall he was taking wheat for us and for my Dad. It was getting quite late, still a good distance from the mill, so they pulled into a farmer's yard. Mr. Halverson came out with his coal oil lantern and said he would make room for a team of horses. Mrs. Halverson was in bed, but she got up and fixed hot biscuits and had warmed meat stew on her wood stove. My Dad could not say enough about the kindness and the speed with which this hot meal was served. They brought in an old mattress and laid it on the floor, for a bed for the men. Next morning they were served pancakes and home cured bacon. When they got to the mill there were a few loads ahead of them. They were prepared to stay, and people like Halverson's were never forgotten. They were mentioned many times, for their kind hospitality. Paul and Dad came home a couple of days later with all their flour. We had enough for ourselves and some people would come and borrow because they did not grind for themselves. I can not say these years were bad because a person didn't live beyond his means. Dad always had some cured pork. We always had a big garden and our own milk, butter and eggs. I sewed all our children's clothes, even Paul was wearing home made checkered flour sack shirts. We did not have washing machines; clothes were washed by hand in a tub and scrubbed on a washboard. In winter we did not have a well so snow was melted on a wood cook stove for cooking and washing. I knitted mitts and socks for everyone. All my children learned to knit. We were hard-up but happy. This was before the family allowance came. Paul worked in the mill to get lumber for our new house.

In 1948 we dug the basement, for now we had eleven children and needed a bigger house even though not all were living at home. One was married and others were away working, or staying in town and going to high school. In 1949, with the help of my Dad who was a carpenter, our new home was built. That fall, my Dad moved from his Fitzsimmons homestead into our old house.

Over the years, we managed to have our children pursue their education and they graduated from St. Joe's High School in Grande Prairie. They took their elementary education at East Kleskun. Then when the older ones were ready for high school they went to Lindsay High School. Their senior grades were finished at Grande Prairie in St. Joe's High School. When East Kleskun closed the younger children were bussed to the consolidated school at Bezanson. The Lindsay High School was closed and the children were bused to Grande Prairie and Sexsmith for their high school grades.

Julia married Gordon Thompson and they farm here at Bezanson. They raised three children. Marlaine married Gary Hessler and they have a boy, Darren,



Paul and Mary Podulsky on their 48th anniversary.

and a girl, Kimberley. Murray married Shirley Lux. Laurie passed away at the age of 21, in November, 1974.

Velma married Joseph Lancaster, of Edmonton. She teaches school in Edmonton and they have four children. Lynda married Glen Sals and they have a boy David. Cheryl, Sandra and Whitfield are all at home.

Stanley married Lois Juneau of Hythe and they have seven children. They live in Sherwood Park, Alberta. He is a drilling foreman with the oilrigs. Their children, David, Douglas, Betty, Gregory, Graham, Gwen and Rolland are all at home.

Alex married Elsie Prime of Pouce Coupe and they live at Charlie Lake, B.C. They have four children, Quinn, Krystal, Tracy, and Alexander, junior. Alex is a heavy duty mechanic.

Tony farms at home, and is company for me as I hope to retire here. There is no place like the country for me.

George married Ednid Prime of Pouce Coupe. They have two children, Billy and Mona. He is a steam engineer working out of Grande Prairie and works his farm at Bezanson in his spare time.

Caroline was in the airforce for quite a few years and met and married a man in the airforce, Robert Kulas of Barry's Bay, Ontario. While they were stationed in the airforce overseas in Metz, France, Caroline was picked Grey Cup Queen.

Robert and Caroline have two children, Allen and Susan. They presently live at the air base in Chibougamau, Quebec, and Robert is an officer with the airforce. This fall they will be living at Dana, Saskatchewan.

Myron married Dianne Bekkerus of LaGlace and they have two children, Kenneth and Beverly. They live in Innisfail and Myron is a driller with the oil rigs.

Mary Ann married Roger Halwa of Bezanson and they have three children, Karen, Cathy, and Kevin. They now live in Grande Prairie.

Paul Junior married Mary Lou Fells of Bezanson and they have a boy, Ronald and a girl, Lisa. He is a salesman and they live in Edmonton.

Barbara married David Greentree of Grande Prairie. She teaches school and they live in Grande Prairie. David works for Pat Garrett.

Area Girl Named Miss Grey Cup Europe

A 22-year-old brown-eyed brunette from Bezanson, Leading Airwoman Caroline Kulas, has been crowned Miss Grey Cup Europe. Stationed at Metz, France, with the RCAF, LAW Kulas reigned over the 6th Annual Grey Cup Europe football game staged by the Air Force as a re-creation of the famed annual football classic in Canada.

She saw the East beat the West with a score of 35-8.

Miss Grey Cup Europe 1960 is a fighter control operator at the RCAF Air Division's radar squadron in Metz. She was selected from 13 pretty airwomen representing the four Canadian fighter wings in France and Germany, 30 Air Material Base in the United Kingdom, and the Air Division's headquarters and radar squadron in Metz.

LAW Kulas is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Podulsky of Bezanson. She went overseas in September.

The selection of Miss Grey Cup Europe was made by an international panel of judges which included a French Air Force officer, a U.S. Army officer and a Canadian civilian stationed with the RCAF in Metz. An overflow crowd of service personnel and their dependents packed the base cinema for the judging which was accompanied by showings of Canadian football films.

LAW Kulas was crowned by Air Commodore Peter Gilchrist of Weyburn, Sask., the Air Division's chief of staff. She was presented with a cheque for $100 at the ceremony.

Airwomen and Canadian high school girls were cheerleaders at the judging, adding traditional football color to the event.



Air Commodore Peter Gilchrist crowns the Bezanson beauty . . .

Paul and I would have been married fifty years if he would have lived three months more. He passed away in December, 1972, and I still live on the homestead that he filed on when he walked from Edson on the Edson Trail. I now have 28 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

THE WILLIAM J. PURVIS STORY

Mary worked in a rope factory when she turned 15, and I worked in Crawfords biscuit factory when I turned 15. I stayed there until I was 19.

The first war broke out. My father was on the oil tankers, they had to supply the battleships with oil. My

brother Henry was a naval officer too. He went down in World War Two with his ship when she was torpedoed, just 7 miles from home. He was an officer and had to be last off. They were on deck when it capsized.

The Purvis' lived on the same street as we and I didn't know Bill then, but I was a good friend of his sister, Nan. Then Bill's first wife died and he came home on leave to get his family settled. He had 2 boys, Bill Jr. and George.

We were married December 19, 1919 and I had a husband and two sons. After we got married we lived in my Dad's house and I kept house for him when he was home from sea. Our first son Jimmy was born there and a little girl we lost, Margaret Jane.

"Pops" (Bill) used to help the undertaker (his uncle.)

We moved to Hagsbrae in Gorebridge. (John) Jock was born there. I went in to Edinburgh when (Agnes) Nan, my only daughter was born and then 2 years later Michael (Mick) was born in Gorebridge. After Mick was born I wanted to go back to the city so we went back to Edinburgh and Bill worked for the street car co. Then we saw a commercial in the paper about Canada, so we applied and came out, landing here May 1st, 1926 in Montreal. We were a week or more on the train. On the train we happened to be in the same carriage as Sissons, the lawyer, and he helped us with the kids. He got off the train and got four quarts of



First house that burned down. L. to R.: John, Henry, Jim, George, Nan, and Bill and Sarah on the step.

milk and a big bag of cookies at Spirit River and brought them in. He sure was good to us.

In Grande Prairie the (women's club) I.O.D.E. there, had a big hall and they had a hot 3 course meal waiting and big box of groceries to take out with us to last two weeks. They were good, there's no doubt about it.

"Bill Innes took us out to our place which had belonged to a bachelor who gambled it off, and it turned out that it didn't belong to him, it belonged to the D.V.A. from whom we purchased it. The snow had just gone and you should have seen the mud, we got stuck 3 times, it was terrible."

When I saw the house I said to Mr. Innes "wait and take us back again. Oh my God, to see those bare floors — all green wood and a wee stove. We must have been daft to come.

Then our trunks didn't come with us, they were held up a month, we hadn't known that we had to have them checked a month early at the boat.

I don't know what I would have done without Mrs. William Seccombe, and Mrs. Secrest, they loaned us dishes, bedding and even a clock, everything to get started until ours came.

When we got here Mick took pneumonia. He was such a pitiful wee creature, so skinny, hardly eating.

"Mrs. Seccombe had an old Overland car and she took us up to old Mrs. Bill Turners, who helped out if you couldn't get to a doctor. She covered him with goose grease and wrapped him up and put a cushion on her oven door and laid him on it. "She was the woman that saved him alright." She got him over the pneumonia but he still wasn't very good. Bill went on saddle horse to Seccombes. Mrs. Seccombe took us in to old Dr. O'Brien. Dr. O'Brien said he had taken pneumonia on the train and he was too long getting attended to, and his little arm and leg had taken polio and was paralyzed. I really felt lost then, but he told us to massage it constantly, and then it did come back again. I was sure scared though.

When we first came there was no water, so young Bill went out in the pasture by the slough and dug a deep hole, hoping clean water would seep into it. Water seeped in all right but it was full of little wrigglers. The neighbours assured us this was good water if little water creatures could live in it; so we strained it and used it. Later we had a dam dug and put a regular well in it. When Hans Rusch bought our farms years later, he had a well drilled and got water right near the house by the gate so that water had been there all those years while we packed ours so far and walked over it.

In August, 1926, twin boys were born at home. It was snowing and storming that night. Bill got Mrs. Fields, the photographer's wife, who used to be a nurse, and Mrs. Seccombe who was our old standby. One was born and I thought that was it. Then Mrs. Seccombe said, "Oh there's another one there," so the second boy was born and here it was snowing like mad and just a wood fire to keep them warm.

They died and were buried at the Glen Leslie Cemetery.

Glen Secrest, Bill Seccombe, and Mrs. Phil Fitzpatrick Jr. all were so good to us, they brought baking and things for the kids, they were wonderful to us.

My father died in February, 1927, and with the money from his estate I bought things for the house and fixed it all up. Then the depression started. We didn't do too badly, we always ate, not fancy, but lots.

"George and Jimmy went to East Kleskun School, Marguerite Fitzpatrick showed them the way. Miss White from Clairmont was the teacher, but she left to get married. Next was Miss Raisin, then Miss O'Connell from Beaverlodge who married Ross Ford, later on Myrtle Tolley (now Mrs. Jack Brown).

Sarah was well known throughout the community



Gathering of the clan on Sunday. Back row L. to R.: Nan Fraser, Sarah, Mark, Henry, Bill Sr., Bill Jr., Purves, Don, George and Jean Fraser, Jim Bob and George Purves.

for her beautiful singing voice and her Scottish and Irish ballads, her special favorite being "Danny Boy".

In 1930 when Bob was born I went into Grande Prairie hospital. It was wonderful weather. Mrs. Nora Shields was in with me and kept us all entertained. She had a girl, Betty.

"One bad day was July 17, 1932. We were all taking a walk up the road that Sunday and my Jock looked back and shouted. "I think our house is one fire".

"By the time we got there we couldn't get anything out, it went like paper. We got there just as the chimney collapsed.

"What hurt the kids most was that their collie dog had been shut in by mistake, and we found his body laying in the corner. There were a lot of tears shed over that dog, he was a beautiful collie."

We had to have somewhere to live, so we pulled two granaries together, put beds in one, and cooked in the other. Jimmy and George stayed at Burrows'.

Al Alderman came early in the morning on the following Friday and I was outside making pancakes for breakfast on the fire and I was singing. He jumped out of the car and said, "What in the hell are you doing singing at 7:00 in the morning?" I said "What's the matter, don't you like my singing". He said, "but after your fire?" Anyway he had happy news for us over pancakes, as the insurance company phoned to say our insurance was coming through and we could build again.

"Everyone was so good to us then, all the neighbours and people from Clairmont and Grande Prairie, Mrs. Storm, the mail lady, wrote to Eaton's and told them the circumstances and they sent out two or three quilts, blankets, sheets, bedding, even clothes and shoes for the kids. It was a good community to live in.

Young Bill worked for Jim Storm and in 1939 was one of the first to enlist in the Army's 49th Loyal Edmonton Regiment, Jock lied about his age and went in April, 1940 and Jimmy in 1941.

"Jock came home only once after that. He came home in a car on a weekend leave from Calgary. I remember him going out the door and saying "Bye Mom". I've got nothing to give you for a keepsake so I'll give you these rosary beads. Then away he went and that was the last time I saw my son."

John (Jock) was killed on December 16, 1943 going into Ortona, leaving a young widow and a year old son in England.

I never did see my Jock's grave until 1975 when Bob (her present husband) and I went on a tour to visit the war graves sponsored by the Legion.

The war graves are all well looked after and beautiful. Jock is buried in the Moro River Cemetery, I'll never forget the visit to that grave. It would make you cry; it was like his funeral all over again.

The highland Regiment played the lament and they had a 21 gun salute and played the Last Post and laid a big wreath on the monument there. They had a sermon at every grave we visited.

"I put a big wreath from the whole family on Jock's grave. It was the least I could do for my boy. He gave all he had, his life."

While the boys were in the Army, Pop was bothered with his eyes and went to Dr. Little who sent him to Edmonton. It was glacoma and they operated but he got very little sight back. In 1942 he went completely blind.



Mark and Robert Purves with colt.

In 1945 we moved to Edmonton. The Blind Institute got us a job with the transit system in the cafeteria, in the street car barns. He had to have sighted help so they hired me. In 1952 Pop got diabetes and we had to leave, it was too much for him.

Bob went to Saskatoon Welders and became a pipeline welder. Henry went to work on construction; and after finishing school, Mark became a pipeline welder too. Bill and Jimmy both went farming after coming out of the Army, and George worked as caretaker at Ortona Barracks in Edmonton, where he still works.

Bill Purvis Sr. passed away in 1956 after a lengthy illness.

Bill Jr. married the former Anna Jantz and they now live near Hythe and have 5 children, 3 of them married.

George married Agnes Houseman and had 7 children, but lost one son, Ricky 3 years ago.

Jimmy was killed in a hit and run accident in Edmonton on December 16, 1966. He was married to Jean Houseman who passed away due to a heart condition 2 years ago. The couple had 2 children, Dennis now married with one child and living in Edmonton and Marylene living with her Aunt Ena Mae at Slave Lake.

Agnes (Nan) married George Fraser, they live on a ranch 7 miles east of Sexsmith, they raised 6 children.

Mick is a guard at Ft. Saskatchewan Penitentiary and is married to the former Joyce Close.

Bob married Effie Teague and they have 10 children.

Mark married Judy Ford and the couple live at Bezanson and have 3 children.

Sarah remarried in 1962 to Robert Fleck and they moved from Edmonton to Sexsmith to retire last year.

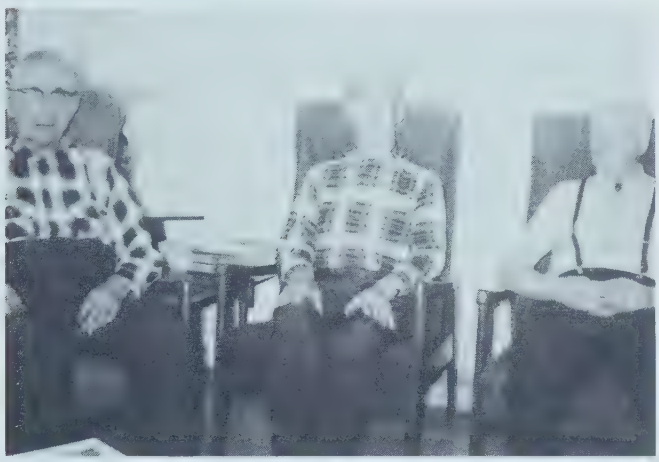
JOHN ROBERTSON

He homestead the S.W.¼ 16-72-3-W6th in 1916

John was a captain of the fire department in Edmonton.

PERCY HOWARD ROGERS

Percy was nicknamed "Harry". He came from England. In 1910 he moved to Manitoba.



L. to R.: Jess Luxemberg, George Hobuluk and Harry Rogers. Taken at Pioneer Lodge in Grande Prairie.

Harry, and a friend of his, Jim Storm, whom he met at Ponoka, Alberta, travelled up the Edson Trail on foot.

In 1914, he took up a homestead on the S.E. 23-72-4-W6th in the Kleskun Hill district.

Harry was active in the Grande Prairie and District Old Timers Association and when he retired, was President of the Golden Age Club.

He moved into the old Pioneer Lodge in 1961, and then to the new one in 1967.

Harry passed away April 1, 1972 at the age of 86 years.

BILL AND MABEL SECCOMBE

Bill and Mabel came in on the Edson Trail with the Crowe family.

They followed the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway, west from Edmonton. They ran a store and restaurant to supply the construction gangs. When construction was completed in 1910, they came to Grande Prairie and filed on two scripts, and a homestead.



This was taken in Secombe's yard around 1925. Back row: Leon Martin, Mabel Secrest, Mrs. Turner's daughter, and Mrs. Turner. Middle row: Frank Mathe, Bill Secombe, ?, Agnes Martin, Clara Martin, and Mr. Turner. Front row: Mr. Secrest, Hazel Ginter.

They homesteaded the E.½ 31 and the S.W.¼ 32-72-3-W6. This land was crossed by the old railroad survey at the old Bezanson townsite.

They farmed and rented the land intermittently until 1926. They moved into Grande Prairie and ran an Auctioneering and Real Estate Business.

In 1930 they moved to Vancouver and bought a large home and ran it as a rooming house.

They are both deceased.

GLENN AND MABEL SECREST — written by Hazel Foore

Glenn Secrest was born in Kansas. There was a large family but Glenn left home, joined the Army and fought in the Phillipine War. He boarded at our place (Ginter's) in Edmonton and enlisted for "Service" in the World War of 1914-18. When he came back to Edmonton, after the war ended, he married my sister, Mabel, and they went to the Kleskun Hill area. This was in the fall of 1919, I believe, anyway there was a terrific amount of snow that year and my sister had never lived on a farm before so I imagine she got pretty lonesome.

Their closest neighbour was a bachelor by the name of Currie on what was later known as the Fenton place. South of their homestead was a Metis by the name of Joe Beatty, his daughter, Mary, became quite friendly with my sister. The Secrest's had no family of their own so when I married Stettler Foore and we farmed the next quarter to them they were quite happy to have our two children at their place.

Our children went to the old Fitzsimmons School. The roads were so bad when our daughter, Vivian, started school I used to take her up to Vinets on Mon-



L. to R.: Glenn Secrest, Mabel Secrest, Kate Bulford, Stanley Bulford, and Haviland Bulford taken in front of Bulford's house.

day morning and she came back with the teacher on Friday night. Arrangements were made so she boarded at Vinet's who lived right down from the school. By the time Don, our son was old enough to go to school the road had been improved enough so they could ride horseback.

The Secrests grew mostly oats to begin with, he had brought a team and 3 cows from Edmonton, along with a walking plough and other machinery. Eventually he grew some sweet clover for seed and hay for his cattle. My sister raised 300 to 400 turkeys once they got established. She also sold a lot of butter. These things along with raising pigs were their only means of livelihood.



Mrs. Mabel Secrest and Sandy Munro at Secrest's place.

They got their water in the winter by melting snow both for the stock and themselves. During the summer a well was dug near a slough. Later on they had a dam from which they got very good seepage water.

There was lots of wood around so this was how we heated our homes. During the winter the men would haul the logs to the house and then saw them with a bucksaw. Later when more people arrived, one man would go around sawing wood so a crew of six or eight men would congregate to help each neighbour saw his pile of wood. Kerosene was used for the lamps at first and when we were able to get gas lanterns and lamps we really thought we had something.

When my sister first went up to the Kleskun Hill country, they rode in a lumber wagon. In a few years Mabel traded butter and got a buggy so that was much nicer.

Mabel was invited by Mr. Currie to a dance at their place and she was the only white woman there. Later they began having dances at the East Kleskun School, after it was built. If you had a five cent piece you would put it in towards the coffee; if not, it was okay. Alzina (Mrs. Phil Fitzpatrick) played the piano and Bill and Jack Fitzpatrick played the violin. Al Alder-



Mabel Secrest and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Rice in front of Secrest's house.

man played the drums and his wife also played the piano, so it seemed as if by this time there were more people and no shortage of dances. Phil, Jack and Bill Fitzpatrick used to step dance during intermission. The ladies brought lunch, made from what they had on hand. I remember I was staying with my sister and we wanted to take a cake to the dance. Coming home from East Kleskun, where I was going to school at the time, I stopped at Mrs. Alderman's place and she gave me a recipe for an eggless, milkless, and butterless cake. I guess we must have had some flour. I really can't recall what the cake was like but it must have been sweet anyway.



U.F.W.A. ladies meeting at Secrest's. L. to R.: Mrs. Rowe Thompson, Mrs. Purves, Mrs. Boyer, Mrs. Vinet, Mrs. Bill Fitzpatrick, Mrs. Ashley Thompson (looking over Mrs. Greenwood), Mrs. Bill Wager, Mrs. Ruth Miner, Mrs. George Tempest, Mrs. Secrest between Mrs. Wager and Mrs. Miner, Mrs. Dumas with baby, Margurite Fitzpatrick, and Alberta Vinet in front.



A group at Vinet's for Christmas. L. to R.: Hans Ludi, Harry Shinn, Frank Vinet peeking around his Dad, Jeanette Vinet in front, George Vinet behind her, Waldo Ginter, Mrs. Clesse, Mr. Parent peeking over, Margaret Vinet, Alberta Vinet holding the cat, and Mrs. Mabel Secrest at the end.

In my time we used to have some great picnics and ball games at Mr. and Mrs. Vinet's right by the Fitzsimmons school. Everyone brought lunch. We had some really good dances in the old Fitzsimmons school before our children started going there. We just made our own fun and even had concerts and plays. A few of us could sing in those days. We also used to have a lot of picnics at the Smoky and combine these with picking berries. We used to go in a lumber wagon. Some ride!

THOMAS SMITH

Thomas Smith was an old lumberjack, a general foreman, and contractor. He built bridges and culverts, and did a lot of prospecting around Camrose. He died in Camrose. When he was in the East Kleskun district he homesteaded the N.E. 17-72-3-W. 6 in 1914.

ALEX STORM

Alex Storm farmed the W½ 24-72-4-W6th, which he obtained through the Soldiers Settlement Board. This land was homesteaded by Jules Nataisse.

MR. AND MRS. BILL STORM

Bill Storm homesteaded two quarters: S.W. 25-72-4-W6th and S.W. 23-72-4W6th. He worked for the land office. They had four children — Bill, Dorothy, Joyce, and Evelyn. From the farm they moved to Grande Prairie, then to Vancouver Island where he still lives.

MR. AND MRS. JAMES STORM

Jim Storm, coming from Ponoka, Alberta, walked in over the Edson Trail in the fall of 1914, with a friend, Harry Rogers, and filed near Kleskun Hills Dec. 2 on the N.W. 22-72-4-W6th. Harry Rogers selected the adjoining quarter. The men both built cabins, but until he enlisted in 1915, Jim batched with Harry.

After the war Jim returned to Southern Alberta for a short time, then came back to the Peace River country, where he acquired a homestead, N.E. 14-72-4-W6th.

Another trip was made to Southern Alberta, in 1920 to bring back his bride, the former Miss A. Alexander, a school teacher.



Mr. and Mrs. Jim Storm and Bill Storm, taken in B.C. in 1968.

Mrs. Storm's father also came North and assisted in building their new home. He lived with them until he passed away at the farm in the 1930's.

Jim worked for the Soldier's Settlement Board for a time.

Mrs. E. A. M. Storm was born and raised in Scotland. She finished her education at Marischall College in Aberdeen. Being too young to teach school in Canada, she went back to school for a time.

Mrs. Storm was a very generous, warm hearted person. She knit for many a child during hard times along with teaching. She tutored those in need during summer holidays. After moving to B.C., she tutored some young people. She laughingly spoke many times of all her family as she dearly loved to call her pupils. She taught at East Kleskun for the last time in 1937 and 1938. She then went west.

I, Anna Ladwig, remember Mrs. Storm as a very dedicated teacher. She was one of my Grade 12 teachers at Hythe High School in 1958-59. I believe this was her last year of teaching. She could have retired sooner but she didn't. One reason, I am told, was as follows. Several of that Grade 12 class had been her pupils since Grade One and she just had to "see them through." I also learned that in her early teaching career she spent a year teaching at Darwin School without pay.

Her concern for her students was well appreciated by most of them. Several of that 1959 class often referred to her as Mrs. "Stormy" when they wanted to tease her. On one occasion that Spring of 59, two of the girls quietly left the last class of the day. They did not escape the watchful eye of the teacher. She had been writing notes on the board but turned just in time to see them slip out the door. "You come back here you two!" Where do you think you're going? To her dismay the girls ignored her, but several of the boys calmly reasured Mrs. "Stormy" they would be back. She

resumed writing notes, suddenly the class burst forth in "Happy Birthday" just as a huge cake and some fresh flowers were placed on her desk by the girls who had disappeared earlier. She was so completely overwhelmed, she just closed her text book and sat down. At this point someone took a snapshot. We spent the rest of the day helping Mrs. Storm celebrate her birthday.

Mr. and Mrs. Storm retired to British Columbia where Jim died in June 1970. His widow continued to live at Campbell River, B.C.

Sandy Storm, a teacher in South Peace for about 40 years, passed away Feb. 26, 1977 in Campbell River, B.C. at the age of 84.

Mrs. Storm came to the Peace River Country in Dec. 1920 and taught in schools at Darwin, East Kleskun, Hythe, Beaverlodge and the old Grande Prairie High School.

Mrs. Storm is survived by one son, Ian.

JOSEPH SWIFT

He homesteaded the N.E.¼ 25-72-4-W6th.

GEORGE AND ANNA TEMPEST

George came to the Peace River Country via the Athabasca route in 1913 and filed on the N.E. 23-72-4-W6th, in the Kleskun Hill District. In 1915, George's wife, Anna arrived to join him.

In 1917 the Kleskun Hill Post Office was moved to the George Tempest farm from its original location on the Charles Binks farm. In 1934, Tempest's built a new house, thus having a new post office as well. On July 1, 1937 Mr. Tempest passed away at his home. Mrs. Tempest kept the post office going until her death on August 23, 1940 at the age of 72 years.



Mr. and Mrs. George Tempest, Harry Rogers in back, and Mabel Secrest at Kleskun Hill Post Office. Mrs. Tempest was the Post Mistress.



Early Post Office — Kleskun Hill. L. to R.: Mrs. Mabel Secrest, Mrs. Dumas, Mrs. Ike Boyer, Mrs. Betsy Tempest, Mrs. May Fitzpatrick, Mrs. Ruth Milner, Mrs. Wm. Purves, Mrs. Martha Wager, Mrs. Bessie Thompson, Mrs. Tressie Vinet. In front are: Mrs. Charlie Brown, Alberta Vinet, Gertrude Fitzpatrick, and Jeannette Vinet.

ROWE THOMPSON

Rowe Thompson left his home in Washington in 1913. He was met, in Edson, by his brother, Hugh, who, with his father Frank, had previously filed on homesteads in the Bezanson area, in 1912. Later, Hugh and Frank moved to the Dimsdale area.

Shortly after his arrival, Rowe filed on the S.E. 20-72-3-W6th, where he farmed until retirement.

In April of 1917, he married Bessie Eisenman, of the Dimsdale area, and together they raised three sons and one daughter; Ross of Whitecourt, Dale, still farming on the homestead in Bezanson, Ron of Calgary and Avis Turner of Namao, Alberta.

Bessie passed away in August, 1944. Rowe retired to Grande Prairie, in 1959, where he resided until his death in February, 1966, at the age of 72 years. In April, 1960, he married Louise Jaque, who now resides in Edmonton.

During his life, while on the farm, Rowe was very active in rodeo activities, often being asked to judge various events in the area.

BILL AND BLAKE WAGER

The Wager Brothers homesteaded the N.W. and the S.W. 30-72-3-W6 in 1913.

THE WHALENS

Thomas and Maud, together with four children, left their Wisconsin home in 1916, and arrived in Grande Prairie on the first train. They filed on the S.E. 30-72-3-W6th.

In June of 1917, their daughter, Alzina, married Phil Fitzpatrick.

In 1918, Thomas became ill and passed away. Mrs. Whalen and sons, Edward and Leon, and daughter, Irene, remained on the homestead for several years. Irene was one of the first students of the East Kleskun school. Shortly after Irene finished school, she and Mrs. Whalen moved to Edmonton. Irene became Mrs. Angus Hall, and resided, for ten years, in Hobema, Alberta, until her husband's death. During those ten years, Angus was station agent for the C.P.R. After his death, Irene returned to Edmonton, where she and her mother lived together until Mrs. Whalen passed away on January 7, 1966, at the age of 89 years. Irene still resided in Edmonton at the time of writing.

As a young man, Leon married Mabel Robideau. They had one son, Bob, of Edmonton, and one daughter, Eunice Arkley, now deceased.

Leon is now retired in Abbotsford, B.C., with his second wife, Martha, after spending many years in Penticton and Chilliwack, B.C.

Edward and wife, Eva, and three children, homesteaded on N.W. 16-73-3-W6th in 1930. They lived there for several years before moving to Terrace,

B.C., where they remained until the time of their passing, Eva in December, 1974, and Ed in January, 1975. They were predeceased by their son, Edward, at age eleven years. Harold resides in California. Colleen lives at Watson Lake, N.W.T.

LAWRENCE WILLETTE

Lawrence was a railroad man. He homesteaded the N.E. 20-72-3-W6 in 1917. After he proved up his homestead he left and went back to the railroad. He died in McLennan.

HARRY WILLIAM

Harry homesteaded the N.W. 20-72-3-W6 in 1915.

Schools

THE EAST KLESKUN SCHOOL

The school was located east of the Kleskun Hills, hence the name; school district number being 3635.



Miss Dorothy Morrison: first teacher at East Kleskun, 1919.

I, Miss Dorothy Morrison (Leslie) was hired at $900.00 a year, i.e., $90.00 a month for ten months, which was a good wage at that time. Most schools were only paying the minimum salary, which was $840.00 a year.



East Kleskun School, taken in 1920. Mrs. Leslie was the teacher.

The school was to be ready in September, so from March, 1919 until June, 1919 it was held in William Calliou's house, empty at this time. It consisted of a long log building, with a centre partition dividing it into two rooms. There was a doorway between the two rooms, and the blackboard was placed all along this wall, partly covering the doorway. The room had desks for about 20 pupils.

I was to board with Mrs. Whalen, and the morning I was to start I rode twelve miles on horseback to my new school, from the old townsite of Bezanson, where my parents were living. I was not used to riding and Tuesday morning I could hardly get on my horse. Wednesday morning I just couldn't make it and I had to walk to school. If I dropped the chalk, I had to ask one of the pupils to pick it up for me. There were no ledges on that blackboard. But Thursday the stiffness was leaving, and I never suffered that way again.

My pupils were mostly Austrian and Indian or Metis. I had only one English speaking pupil, Irene Whalen.

The Austrian children were the Matechucks, Struhans, Babnicks and another family of four children, whose mother had left them. They were living with their father in a log hut with no floor. Times were hard, and to make a living, the father went to work in the mines at Drumheller, leaving the children, aged five to twelve, in the house alone. After a time I noticed that these children always had cold pancakes and nothing else in their lunch pail, so I reported this to the health authorities. They came out, inspected the home, and placed the children in foster homes in or around Edmonton.

The Indian or Metis families were the Supernaults, Callious, Grays, Bellcourts and Desjarlais. At the Calliou school there were no toilets, and no drinking water, except from a small slough near by.

In September, 1919, the term began in the new school. The children were interesting and co-operative and anxious to learn, but the first Christmas concert was difficult. Many of the children were musical, so we had singing, dancing, drills and pantomines. The parents were all there; we had a large Christmas tree and presents for all the children. No one seemed to



East Kleskun School children (1927). Back row, L. to R.: Mabel Cumberworth, Evelyn Thompson, Clara Gray, Irene Cumberworth, Lil Oe, Miss Raisin (teacher), Archie Delaney, Jack Gray, Joe Clesse, George Gray, Malcolm Calliou, Albert Calliou. Front row: Lillian MacDonald, Thelma and Cora Morehouse, Margurite Fitzpatrick, Verna MacDonald, Maggie Czupryk, Dale, Frank, and Ross Thompson, Clarence Boyer, and Jim Gray.

notice when Santa's beard caught on a branch of the tree and half of it remained there.

Later on, I had a few more English speaking pupils; George Cave, Irene and Mabel Cumberworth, Bert McKenzie, Rene and Victor Oe, and for a while Winnie and Dorothy Debolt. In 1920 I had five more; the Delaney's and Rowe Thompson's two boys.

I stayed at this school two years. Mrs. Storm was one of the teachers who followed me.



Teacher: Luella Phillips taken in the spring of 1939. Left back: Johnny Czupryk, Annie Czupryk, Zena Sych, Doreen Brown, Wilfred Gray, Lloyd Brown, Raymond Boyer, Meryl Nutt. Second row: Iowne Gillespie, Helen Czupryk, Geneva DeMaere, Meryl Gillespie, Velma Podulsky, Walter Sych standing behind Harry Boyer, Stanley Podulsky peeking around George Czupryk, Phillip DeMaere, Henry Diederich. Third row: Ronnie Thompson, Vernie Fitzpatrick, Ada Gresko, Elva Gillespie, Kathleen Cowell. Front row: Bill Fitzpatrick, Bill Greko, Alex Podulsky, Robert Purves, Evelyn Cowell.

Following is a list of teachers and the years they taught after Miss Morrison:

Mrs. Jim Storm, 1921-26; Miss Frieda Raisin, 1926-27; Miss Hazel Peterson, 1927-28; Miss Nelson, 1928 - until Christmas; Mrs. Urich, January, 1929 - until Easter; Miss Cleora White, Easter, '29 - June, '29; Miss Cleora White, 1929-30; Miss Grace Ferris, 1930-31; Mr. Black, 1931-33; Miss Myrtle Tolley, 1933-34; Miss Reith, 1934-35; Miss Emily Clifford, 1935-36; Miss Margaret Hardisty, 1936-37; Mrs. Jim Storm, 1937-38; Miss Luella Charlotte Phillips, 1938-39; Miss Luella Charlotte Phillips, 1939 - May, 1940; Miss E. Marie Henning, May, 1940 - June, 1940; Miss E. Marie Henning, 1940-41; Miss Noreen O'Connell, 1941-43; Miss Eileen Murray, 1943-44; Mr. Valentine Wallace, 1944-45; Miss Annie Chugg, 1945 - until Christmas; A. G. Nicholson, January, 1946 - June, 1946; A. G. Nicholson, 1946-47; Miss Clarice Wold, 1947- until April, 1948; Mrs. Julia Thompson, April - May, 1948; Miss Eileen Steed, May - June, 1948; Mr. Paul Schau, 1948-49; Mrs. Margaret White, 1949-50; Mrs. Edna Kiselczuk, 1950-54; Mr. William Adair, 1954-57.

The school was the community centre of a large district. It was used for Church, picnics, dances, and political meetings, to name a few. The teacherage was built in 1937.

However, all good things have to come to an end, and in February, 1957, the School Board had their annual meeting. The minutes read:

Julian Jobson nominated chairman. Carried. Ed Coney nominated secretary. Carried. Moved by Rene Oe, seconded by Julian Jobson, that we centralize this school district to whatever point is decided upon at



East Kleskun School taken in 1957.



East Kleskun Teacherage taken in 1957.



East Kleskun's School Barn taken in 1957.

next meeting. Carried. This meeting to be called by County School Board, before next term. The reason for another meeting being called: to hold vote whether this district vans to Grande Prairie or Bezanson. No vote was taken as this meeting as it had not been advertised for that purpose.

Local Board:
Chairman: H. M. Stewart
Secretary: Ed Coney
Meeting adjourned.

So, in Junè, 1957, our East Kleskun School, with all its cherished memories of oh!, so many people, closed its doors, never to be opened again.

On August 13, 1957, a letter went to the Herald Tribune which read as follows:

Please have the following ad placed in the next issue of your paper: Sealed tenders for the purchase of the individual building on the East Kleskun School site in Pt. N.W. 30-72-3-W. 6th, are invited. A certified cheque of 25 percent of the bid must accompany the tender. Sale is subject to Ministerial approval. Lowest or any tender not necessarily accepted. Tenders to be in the hands of the Undersigned by Tuesday, September 10, 1957. To Herald Tribune by Secretary-Treasurer, R. B. Bowan.

At a meeting of the School Committee, held September 11, 1957, a tender was accepted for all buildings on the East Kleskun School site, which included land, school, teacherage, and barn were sold to Ed Coney.

Churches

HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH — KLESKUN HILL

The Catholics of the early days, from 1902 to 1932, were looked after by the Oblate Fathers. The first, Fr. Josse, arrived at Lake Saskatoon from Dunvegan. He spent the most of thirty years in the Grande Prairie area. In 1904 he was joined by Fr. LaTreste.

In 1908, the first Catholic church, at Lake Saskatoon, was torn down and moved to Bear Creek, in Grande Prairie. In 1911, with Fr. Josse in charge, and Frs. Serrand and Wagner as assistants, they travelled many miles on horseback visiting the sick and needy. Mass was said at the two main outposts, Lake Saskatoon and Kleskun Lake. Mass was said in the Louie Calliou home, as well as other homes in the area. Later, posts were set up in Clairmont, Buffalo Lakes, Beaverlodge, Hythe and Rio Grande.



The old Catholic Church.

In the early 1920's, the first Kleskun Hill church was built, on land donated by Mr. LaRue, N.E. 12-72-4 W6th, directly across from the present church. It was built, from hewed tamarac and rough lumber, by volunteer labour.

In 1931, Fr. Serrand, who was in charge of out missions, was replaced by Fr. Lajoie, who was joined by Fr. Puchniak. Because most of the parishioners lived north of the church, Fr. Lajoie decided, in 1931, to



Father Spicer and Kleskun Hill Ladies' Altar Society 1946.

move it north on land donated by Pager Bros. (N.E. 30-72-3 W6th, near Fentons.) It was moved on sleighs, with steam engines, which had to be abandoned for twelve horses.

1932 ended the Oblate Fathers missions in the area. The Redemptorist fathers took over, with Fr. McQuire in charge. Many redemptorist, such as, Fathers Cunningham, Naphin, McKenna, Stephens, Murphy, Campbell, Crean, Martin, Spricer, Hague, Redmond, Molland, Dales, Corbett, Liska, McNalley, Murray and others, have served us over the years.

In 1947, on land donated by Joe Diederich, under the direction of Fr. Hague, the present, Mother of Perpetual Help, church was built. Many hours of volunteer labour, made the official opening, on October 26, 1947, possible.

In 1951, it became a mission, of Sexsmith parish, with Fr. Dales in charge. The Sexsmith church, and



Bezanson Catholic Church. Reverend Father Murray, Pastor at the time this picture was taken, passed away July 2, 1978.

Bad Heart straw church, were built under his direction. In 1959, Dr. Dales was replaced, for one year, by Fr. Molland. Fr. Thomas Murray replaced him, taking charge of Sexsmith and Bezanson, and remains our priest in 1976.

Upon completion of our present church, the original Kleskun Hill church was sold, to the "4 C" club, and used as a community hall. It was later sold, to Mr. Paul Podulsky, and now serves as a machine shed in the Podulsky yard.

Clubs

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE — by Julia Thompson

Even before our council was formed, much credit was due to the ladies of our parish for their achievements in furnishing the church, assisting the parish financially through difficult times, and helping with religious instruction with the children. Every job was challenging and none impossible.

One such memorable incident was in August in 1934 when it was decided that the church needed instant beautification, inside and out, because Bishop Guy was coming for confirmation on Sunday. The parishioners faithfully turned out for the work bee on Saturday and eagerly busied themselves at a "new look" for our church, situated north of highway 34, near Fentons. The ladies scrubbed inside while the men altered the dreary outside appearance. They planted a border of poplar trees around the church and walk entrance, by digging holes and sticking cut trees into them. Everything looked so genuinely beautiful in all that green finery! Spirits were dampened however, the next day after mass and confirmation when the great heavens above complimented them with scorching rays of sunshine. The leaves limply tried to look their best — all for the glory of God! Moods soon changed however, when the ladies ably spread a picnic banquet fit for a king. Delicious food, races and ball games just added icing to a scrumptious cake.

People from all denominations came from far and near to the parish picnics and everyone had a good time. Some will probably remember the open-air services and picnics held at the Ed Grant farm near the Kleskun Lake creek. Distance was no barrier and there were very few motor vehicles in those days. In order to be there by ten or eleven in the morning, you had to get up with the chickens, to have enough time to get all the chores done.

June of 1946 saw the amalgamation of our Altar Society. A meeting was held at the home of Mike and Joe Diederich and, under the leadership of Father John Spicer, C.S.S.R., the group became known as the Kleskun Hill Ladies Altar Society. The president was Mrs. Phil Fitzpatrick and the secretary was Miss Annie Diederich.

The minutes of the first meeting recorded after that formation follows:
July 9, 1946

Father Spicer opened the meeting with a few short prayers. The secretary read the minutes of the June meeting. Mrs. Bill Garrett moved that the secretary see Johnny Stark about the rent for the booth which we used on the 21 of June. Mrs. Bill Garrett gave the secretary $25.00 which she collected from several bachelors of the district. With all expenses paid from the two picnics, there now is $191.21 in the bank.

Mrs. Pete Donahue moved that we have a chicken supper and bazaar as soon as possible after threshing. Germaine Albinati seconded the motion. Carried.

The work was divided into four groups and two members were appointed at the head of each group to supervise work being done.

Homecooking — Mrs. Bill Fitzpatrick, Mrs. P. Donahue

Fancy Work — Mrs. Bill Duffy, Mrs. Phil Fitzpatrick

Entertainment — Germaine Albinati, Elaine Fitzpatrick, and Annie Diederich

Bingo — Julia Podulsky and Rita Dumas.

Mrs. Sych and Mrs. O. Albinati agreed to be in charge of the chicken supper, finding out what each could bring.

Germaine moved that we have a membership fee. Mrs. O. Albinati seconded the motion. Fee would be one dollar per year. Motion was also passed to fine each absent member twenty-five cents.

Mrs. Donahue offered to make a fruit cake for a raffle at the bazaar. Mrs. Garrett donated a silk patchwork quilt and Mrs. Sych donated thirty pounds of honey.

Father Spicer moved that we have a church picnic on Kleskun Hill, July 21, 1946.

The next meeting to be held at Donahues, on August 13.

Germaine moved that meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Donahue seconded the motion.

Lunch was served by hostess Annie Diederich. A few pictures were taken of members present.

There were many fund-raising campaigns for a new church. Some of these were chicken suppers, bingos, bazaars, card parties, putting on plays, dances, raffles and auction sales. One such auction turned out hilariously. Some one had donated a billy goat and the poor thing was re-auctioned several times before it disappeared into the bushes behind the old log Bezanson hall.

Our new Bezanson church dream, became a reality in October, 1947, and the Altar Society humbly took credit for all the priceless help received from everyone. Even people with no church affiliation unselfishly donated toward the building fund. No words can better describe our wonderful Bezanson community.

On December 9, 1949 our C.W.L. was born at the home of Mrs. Zotique Menard, with Mrs. D. O. Carroll of Grande Prairie as guest speaker. Her informative description of the C.W.L. was the seed planted for our Bezanson sub-division. Our leader was Father John Hague C.S.S.R., president — Mrs. Phil Fitzpatrick and secretary Mrs. Frank Dumas.

Minutes of that meeting were:
Dec. 9, 1947.

The Bezanson Altar Society ladies held their December meeting at the home of Mrs. M. Menard with ten members in attendance. Minutes of the November meeting were read. Mrs. Menard moved they be adopted as read. Mrs. George Laverick seconded. Mrs. Phil Fitzpatrick moved that two families be appointed to clean the church once a month for two months. Mrs. Garrett seconded.

Mrs. Menard adjourned the meeting seconded by Mrs. Garrett.

Mrs. Carroll attended meeting and gave a talk on C.W.L. We then decided to form our own.

Election of officers took place. Mrs. Menard moved that some officers remain for two years. Seconded by Mrs. Donahue. Those staying in office were: President — Mrs. Phil Fitzpatrick, secretary — Mrs. Frank Dumas, 1st- vice president — Mrs. O. Albinati. Other officers elected were Mrs. Donahue — 2nd-vice president, Mrs. George Laverick 3rd-vice president. 1st councillor — Mrs. Bill Garrett, 2nd councillor — Mrs. Harvey Bulford, and 3rd councillor — Mrs. Annie Gresko. Moved by Mrs. Albinati, seconded by Mrs. A. Bulford.

Mrs. Carroll moved that the motion be adopted, seconded by Father Hague.

Honor came to our council in 1953 when our president, Mrs. Phil Fitzpatrick of Kleskun Hill was chosen as Provincial C.W.L. president for Alberta. She held that office until 1955.

On June 2, 1954 our C.W.L. hosted a diocesan convention at the Bezanson Hall. Our leader was Father



Mrs. P. Fitzpatrick

Dales C.S.S.R. Mrs. Dale Thompson was president and Mrs. Vern Patterson was secretary. That was the first convention held in such a small parish and Mrs. Phil Fitzpatrick came as provincial president.

Time brings some changes and it was difficult for the council to continue actively. The members felt it was too wide-spread an organization for so small a mission, five or six members, so they became inactive with only one meeting per year. Upkeep of the church still kept them involved, and we now have a propane furnace replacing the original coal and wood one.

On July 23, 1975 Mrs. Flore Shaw from Fairview came to a C.W.L. meeting at Mrs. Harvey Bulfords and boosted our membership to thirteen. As a result, under the leadership of Father Thomas J. Murray C.S.S.R. our president Mrs. Gerald Oe, and secretary Mrs. Gordon Thompson, the council won a cup and plaque for having the greatest enrollment of new members in one year, percentage wise. At the convention, May 1, 1976 at St. Thomas More School, Fairview, the glamorous trophy was presented to Mrs. Gerald Oe, who represented our C.W.L.

Presently, the ladies are looking after the religious needs of our children by making available to them correspondence courses and their efforts will be well rewarded on May 29, 1977 when Archbishop Henri Legare will hold confirmation at our Lady of Perpetual Help church here in Bezanson.

We now have 15 members, mostly active when roads and weather permit. And thus our C.W.L. continues to work in its small way for God, Home, and Country.



Gathering at Phil Fitzpatrick's on June 11, 1948 on the occasion of their 25th wedding anniversary.



A group of ladies that belonged to a club in the East Kleskun district.

Fitzsimmons



Family Histories

GEORGE AMIREAUX

George left his home in New Brunswick as a young man and headed for the Klondike gold rush. He left Vancouver by boat and went to Skagway. From there, he went over the Chilkoot Pass, camping on the shores of Lake Bennett with hundreds of others, waiting for spring to come so they could push their boats into the water and be on their way. In the meantime, boats had to be made with whatever material they could get in the way of lumber. Spring finally did come, and George was on his way with hundreds of others onto Lake Tagish, Marsh Lake and then into 50 Mile River, pulling onto shore at Whitehorse. During his stay there, he met a widow by the name of Mrs. Lottie Raisen, who shortly became Mrs. Amireaux. She also was on her way to Dawson City accompanied by her grown son, William. George went on to Dawson City, Mrs. Amireaux following later.

George also told me about spending one winter at the mouth of the Hootalingua River. He travelled through the Five Finger Rapids, where many a Klondiker lost his provisions and some lost their lives. Dawson City was finally in sight and the last leg of the journey was up to Bonanza Creek, where Henderson had found the first gold. However, much to his dismay and disappointment and not unlike hundreds of others, he found that all the claims which had gold, were taken and all he could do was stand and watch while the others dug gold.

Mr. and Mrs. Amireaux left Dawson, came back to Vancouver, stayed there a while and then ventured up to the Peace River country, where they homesteaded in the Bezanson District (on the John Sarmaga Place.) I cannot recall the exact year they arrived, however, I do recall Mrs. Amireaux helping to care for flu patients in Grande Prairie after World War I.

Mrs. Amireaux worked in Grande Prairie on and off for years, mostly in the winter time. They seemed very happy with their way of life on the homestead. George never became a big farmer, but seemed content with a small operation. He farmed with four 'cayuses'.

Many happy hours were spent telling and retelling stories about the Klondike and George used to recite Robert Services' poems, much to the delight of all listeners.

In 1936 the Amireauxs moved to Grande Prairie, where they lived for a few years. Mrs. Amireaux passed away first, but George lived to the ripe old age of 95 years. He spent the last while in a home, where he fell off a chair breaking his hip. He never did recover from this accident. Both are buried in the Grande Prairie Cemetery.

WALTER BALDWIN

Walter Baldwin better known as Baldy, was born in Ontario. He later lived in Govan, Saskatchewan.

He came to the Peace River country about 1928,



Walter Baldwin — bear.

perhaps earlier. He worked as a hired man for several farmers for several years.

In about 1935 he homesteaded a quarter section on the bank of the Smoky River and in the Fitzsimmons School District. He worked part time for me (George Laverick) in 1937 and 1938 and also did considerable brushing, with an axe, on his own homestead. He never did get any land broke so eventually abandoned it. In 1939, 1940 and '41 he worked for different farmers in the area. He worked a good deal for Alex Love and John Edwards as well as others.

In October, 1941 he joined the Armed Forces and was later sent overseas.

He married in England. He and his wife came back to Canada but soon returned to England to stay.

JACK BASKERVILLE

Jack came from England and homesteaded the N.W. 22-73-3-W6 in the Fitzsimmons District in 1927. He stayed with Gene Gaboury until he got a little log shack built on his own land. He still continued to work with Gene as he had not horses or machinery of his own.

Jack joined the Armed Forces in 1939 and was sent to Vancouver. Here he met and married a widow with two children. Shortly afterwards he was sent overseas.

He came back after the war was over and rejoined his family. One daugher was born after his return.

Jack passed away in 1976.

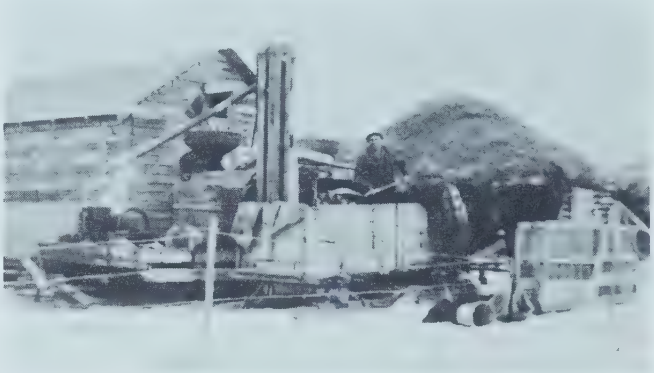
CHARLES BREWER

Charles Thomas Brewer was born in Moore, New Zealand in 1879. He went to England and there he met and married Rose May Mitchum in 1895. They came to Canada and settled in Hull for awhile, working in a foundry. They soon moved on to Vancouver, where he worked as a contractor and builder for several years. They had three sons; Ernie, Walter and Wesley.

When World War I broke out, Charles and his two eldest sons, Ernie and Walter, joined up and went overseas. Mrs. Brewer did Red Cross work as a nurses aid during the war. After the war was over, all three were fortunate enough to return, and that is when they decided to come to the Peace River country. In 1918, Charles homesteaded on N.½ 12-73-3-W6 near the Smoky River.

The eldest son Ernie married Betty Graham in 1920. They had one son. In 1922 they moved to New Jersey, U.S.A. to make their home.

The second son Walter didn't feel farming was for him, so he left and went back to Vancouver. He was in Edmonton for awhile, and it was there that he met and married his wife Megan, and they continued on to the coast. They had eight children.



Grain Cleaning.

In the spring of 1925, a bush fire came through and they lost everything except the house, several stacks of grain went up in smoke, also some livestock. They had flailed a large quantity of grain in the barn loft during the winter which they lost along with the barn. They managed to salvage a little bit of wheat for seed. They moved a lot of things out of the house, blankets, clothing, furniture, etc., to try and save in case the house burned but flying sparks caught it on fire.

The RCMP came out a few days later to see if there was anything they needed but Charles said, "No, they were o.k." but when Wesley went to Rooney's Store, the Police had left an order there for two pair of new boots for them. I guess they saw theirs were in pretty rough shape.

The youngest son, Wesley farmed with his father for several years. In 1927, Mrs. Brewer left for Vancouver. Wesley got a homestead adjoining his father's (S.W.¼ 12-73-3-W6), and they continued to farm together. They bought a 15-30 McCormick Deering tractor and breaking plow and a Case threshing machine. Wesley did a lot of custom work around the district, while Charles was out doing carpenter work. He built a large barn for Tom Sheahan near Clairmont and a house for Ray Steeves, also the Kerr's house at the four mile corner in 1927.



Wesley and Mildred Brewer, daughter Jenny.



Mildred and Dennis Brewer.

Charles later worked in Grande Prairie for a blacksmith, Mr. Barley, making sleighs and wagon boxes. In 1931, he helped build the Fitzsimmons School and some of the desks. From 1927-30, they built a lot of houses for the Empire Settles (from Britian).

In 1936, they built a new house and that fall, November 21, Wesley married Mildred Proffitt. They continued to farm until 1945. They sold Wesley's land to Mrs. Stearn and moved to the coast, where they bought a small farm at Whonnock, B.C.

Charles also sold his land and went with them. He bought a house a short distance away. He lived there until he passed away on August 1, 1952 at the age of 73.

Wesley worked as a carpenter and handyman in a mill until 1951. He started working for the Co-op Hardware and Feed Store in Haney. Later they sold their farm and bought a house in town. He worked for the Co-op 23 years, the last eight as general manager. He retired in 1974.



Dennis Brewer riding his goat Billy while Mother Mildred looks on.

Wesley had two sons born when they lived in the Fitzsimmons District and two daughters born after they went to the coast. Dennis and Irma live in Terrace, B.C., where he is the manager for a finance company. They have a girl and a boy.

Garry and Maureen live in Coquitlam, B.C., where he works for Simpson Sears and they have two daughters.

Marilyn and Dennis Munro live in Port McNeil on Vancouver Island and they have two sons.

Jenny and Gaten Morin live in Burnaby, B.C., and have one son.

JACK CASSEY

Jack came to Canada from England. His trade was a baker, but when the depression came, he was out of work, so he took a homestead in the Fitzsimmons District. He had never been on a farm before, he knew very little about it. He managed to get a few acres cleared, but he had a hard time making a living. Jack died in November, 1939.

JAMES CONEY AND FAMILY

James Coney, wife Mary Ann and family immigrated from Scotland to Canada in 1928. The family consisted of four boys and two girls; Jim, Ed, Hugh and John, Peggy and Betty. The oldest daughter, Mary Spiden came to Canada the following year with her husband and baby daughter.

Our family embarked on our long voyage April 28th, and landed at Quebec, May 5th. From Quebec we travelled by boat to the Great Lakes. The remainder of the journey was via train to Winnipeg and on westward. From Quebec the train moved at times very slow. The boys would get off, gather wood, catch the train and use the wood to cook the meals on a stove. The family arrived in Grande Prairie, May 11th. The next morning the final leg of the trip was completed to our destination, Bezanson. There a farm had been made ready for us by the Soldier's Settlement Board, four miles north, and one mile east of Bezanson store, the North ½-1-73-3. This land had formerly belonged to Frank Orr.

Father worked as a shepherd before coming to the Peace River country. One reason he had picked this area was the flattering brochures with beautiful pictures which were sent to us by the immigration department. It appeared to be a prosperous farming district. Mother thought her family would benefit from this move. Brochures are one thing; reality another, we quickly found. We got stuck in the mud before we reached our farm.



James Coney, Peggy, Jim, Ed. Front Row — Jock — Betty.

The homes in Scotland are brick or stone so we were surprised, and disappointed to find our home to be, half lumber, half logs. The first night was very warm so we opened the windows. In the morning, we awoke with bites and bumps, wondering what was the cause. Mosquitoes were new to us. We learned from the neighbors, how to make smudge to control the pests. We heard the tale, almost believable, about a man over hearing two mosquitoes talking at the foot of his bed. Said one, "Shall we eat him here or take him down the trail". The other replied, "We had better eat him here, if we take him down the road, the big ones will take him away from us."

The day after we arrived and were getting settled, Dad inadvertently dropped a match in the dry knee high grass, as he lit a cigarette, starting a fire we tried in vain to stop. It burned a neighbor's log cabin home. We were getting experience fast as pioneers in a new country. We soon became acquainted with neighbors, Tom and Susie Rice, Charlie and Wes Brewer, George Fish and Mr. and Mrs. George Amireaux, an older couple who helped us in many ways. Having only 14 acres under cultivation, we spent most of the first summer cutting and piling brush, getting more land ready for the breaking plow. During the summer our beloved mother became ill and passed away in May, 1929. Getting along with mother was a difficult task.

The nearest school was Lindsay where Betty attended a few months. Later Fitzsimmons school was opened in the autumn of 1930. Betty and John attended there. For some time the way to school lacked a proper road. We had to climb over brush piles and wade through water.

In 1936 Dad went back to Scotland for a trip and the following year Christina Smith came to Canada and they were married the same year.

When World War Two erupted, all four boys enlisted. In 1932 Ed married Bobby Richard, settled in the East Kleskun area. During the war Hugh married a Scotch girl and stayed in Scotland. Jim brought back an English war bride, settled in Edmonton, he passed away in 1966. John stayed at home for awhile after the war, then married June Lucas, they live in Bezanson. Peggy married Ernie Robideau in 1934 and moved to the Bezanson district. Betty married Clyde Norton in 1936, making their first home in the East Kleskun area. Dad moved to Clairmont in 1950. He died in February, 1953. Christina passed away 13 years later in 1966. — The Family.

GEORGE FISH

George was born in England in 1907. He came to Canada in 1919, with his parents and two sisters. They lived in Grande Prairie. He had several jobs until he grew up. Then he homesteaded on land on the bank of the Smoky River in the Fitzsimmons District, in about 1929.

He built a small house and cleared a few acres. George lived with the Albert Proffitt family for a couple years and helped them build their house on their homestead.

In 1934, he went to the Goodwin District. When war broke out, George enlisted in the Navy and took his training at Esquimolt, B.C. He was a cook on the ship. In 1944, the ship he was on was torpedoed and he was killed. George was 37 years old and buried at sea.



Geo Fish.

EDMUND AND DELIA GABOURY

Edmund was born in Little Falls, Minnesota, U.S.A. in January, 1903. He lived there until 1913 when he moved with his family to Rosthern, Saskatchewan. Delia Doucette was also born in Little Falls in June, 1906. Her family moved to Rosthern in 1912.

Edmund and Delia were married on September 5th, 1923 and stayed at Rosthern farming during the depression. In 1940 they decided to come to the Peace River district. They had a 1928 Model A Ford car in which they loaded their belongings and their children and headed west.

Edmund and Delia and family arrived here on October 26th looking for land. They met Ross McKinnon who wanted to sell but this was at the end of the depression and money was scarce. They made a deal. They traded their Model A car for a half section of land and both families were happy. They now owned the S.½ 30-73-2-W6. Their son, Leonard, later acquired the N.E. of 30. Mr. and Mrs. McKinnon left for Vancouver with the old car and made it all the way.

The Gaboury family worked hard on their new farm. They cleared and broke the land and also built a new house. After fifteen years when the family was grown Edmund and Delia moved to Grande Prairie. They later sold the farm to Bob and Margaret White.

Edmund and Delia had five children. Florence who

married Joe Fitchett lives at Debolt. They have five children. Doris and Ignaces Makrocki of Sexsmith have five children. Their eldest son, Raymond, and his wife Lillian life in Grande Prairie with their seven children. Yvonne and Don Mitchell who live in Morinville have nine children. Leonard lives at home. Edmund and Delia have twenty-six grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren.

EUGENE GABOURY FAMILY

Eugene was born in 1898 near Little Falls, Minnesota. When he was fourteen, his parents Peter and Clara Gaboury, brothers and sisters moved to Spiritwood, Saskatchewan.

In 1920 he married Mary Lemke and they spent their early life together renting farms at Rosthern and Tisdale, Saskatchewan.

The promise of great farming opportunities brought them and Mary's parents, John and Helena Lemke and family, to the Grande Prairie area in 1928. Eugene homesteaded in the Fitzsimmons District. For two years he rented the Shortreed Place in the Crystal Creek area. During this time a log shack was built on the homestead and a bit of breaking had to be done. In order to plow, Eugene needed six horses, but had only brought four horses with him. Tom Newton from the Grande Prairie Land Office lent him the other two.

One day Mary decided to bake bread. Since she didn't have an oven, she packed the dough and pans into the Chevrolet Touring car and headed for the neighbors, the Phil Daigles. On the trail she hit a stump, scattering the pans and dough. She recovered what she could and carried on to complete the job.

After the farm was sold, they operated a small store and restaurant near the Smoky River Ridge. They sold this and bought a farm in the Goodwin area, where they reside at the present time.



Gene Gaboury.



Gene Gaboury.

In 1970, they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in the Teepee Creek Hall. Eugene and Mary raised four children; Sadie, Bud, Lawrence and Alice.

Sadie (Mrs. John Sarmaga) was born in Rosthern, Saskatchewan, teaches and resides on a farm in Bezanson.

Albert (Bud) was born in Tisdale, Saskatchewan, married Lucille Steeves and live in the Fitzsimmons District. They have two sons; Wayne married Barbara Johnston and they have three children, Michelle, Wade and Nicole; Doug married Jane Murphy and they have three daughters, Connie, Tammy and Kimberly. Besides farming together, Bud and his sons spend time as drillers in the oil patch.

Lawrence married Faye Coney and now farms a flat near the Smoky River Bridge. His son Jim married Dianne Carragher. He and his father formed the Big Foot Construction Co. and operate "Cats".

Carrie and her husband, Brian McQuaig live and work in Grande Prairie. Janet lives at home and is completing her grade 12 at Ridgevalley School.

Alice (Mrs. Fred Jennings) of Edmonton is a Nurse's Aid in the Royal Alex. Their four children, Marlys (Mrs. Hank Meyer), Monty, Melody and Roxanne live near by.

FRANK GALLAGHER

Frank Gallagher filed on the during the late 20's or early 30's. He lived alone in a small shack which he had built but he visited his neighbors often. He liked to talk and to tell stories but he also relished a bit of home cooling. He had a white beard which was fairly abundant. The first time some of the district saw him they thought for sure that Santa Claus had come down from the North Pole.

CARL GIRLICH

Carl was born in Germany in 1892, was married and had three sons and one daughter. In 1929, he came to Canada to make a better life for his family, which he hoped to bring over when he had a home established for them.

In 1930, he worked for Oscar Abinati at Bezanson. In 1931, Carl homesteaded in the Fitzsimmons District. He built a house, and cleared and broke some land. By 1939, when war broke out, he was unable to

get his family over here. It was several years after the war before he got any word of his family. When he did, he learned that he had lost two sons in the war.

In 1951, he went wth his friend Hans Ludy up North to Fort Fitzgerald to trap. Later he went out to Yellowknife, N.W.T. alone. Carl was there until 1966, when he went back to Germany for two weeks. He saw his wife, daughter and one son. The next year, he went back for several months. When he came back, he went into Pioneer Lodge. Shortly afterwards, he had a stroke which slowed him down some. In 1967, he suffered yet another stroke, but was still able to get around. Carl enjoys his plants and flowers and certainly has a green thumb. His window sills are covered with plants. His wife passed away in 1970.

SOLOMON AND CORNELIA GRAHAM

Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Graham moved from the Kleskun Hill district to Fitzsimmons in the early 1930's to file on a homestead, the S.E. 21-73-3-W6. Although they were born in Nova Scotia they had come to the Kleskun Hill district from Tate, Saskatchewan in about 1912.

Mrs. Graham's brother, Dexter Wagner, filed on the quarter directly north of Solomon's. Along with their neighbor, Cecil Lebbell, the little "village" of "Punkin Center" thrived.

Children as well as the grown up folks were always welcome at the Solomon Graham's home for a cup of tea, a cookie and perhaps best of all for stories of the years gone by.



Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Graham. Golden Wedding Anniversary July 1933.

Mr. and Mrs. Graham celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary on July 21, 1933 at a picnic on the Clarence Cornborough's farm. Two years later Mr. Graham passed away. Mrs. Graham and her brother, Dexter Wagner, died some years later.

DELANCEY GRAHAM

Delancey was born in Nova Scotia, was married and had six children. After his wife died, he decided to come to Alberta with his brother, in 1910. They settled at Kleskun Hill and later homesteaded in the Fitzsimmons District. His children were: Abner, who served overseas in World War I. After he came back, he married Lottie and they had two boys, Wilbur and Windthrop. Lottie died in August, 1934. Abner moved to the Bad Heart, farmed for a few years and has since passed away.



Delancey and Solomon Graham.

Walter also served in the Army. After World War II, he married Sophie Lappenbush. He passed away.

Betty married Ernie Brewer and they now reside in New Jersey, U.S.A. There were three other children, Wilfred, Herbert, and Agnes.

BILL GRAHAM

Bill was born in Nova Scotia in 1887. He married Rose Swift also born in Nova Scotia. They came to Alberta in 1910 and homesteaded in the Kleskun Hill District. They farmed there until 1931. At that time they took a homestead in the Fitzsimmons District. Bill did all of his farming with oxen. They left and went to Vancouver in 1940. Bill passed away December 31, 1951, with Rose following a few years later.

Bill and Rose had six children. Ester married Louie Withers and had five children, Joe, Don, Doris, May

and Grace. Blanche was born in 1915 and died in 1930. Gladys married Young Harmon in 1938 and had six daughters, Rosann, Buelah, Connie, Loreen, Norma and Dora. Mary joined the Army and served four years in the CWAC overseas. She married Bill Fedorick, and they now live in Vancouver and have one daughter, Gloria. Billy and Muriel live in Vancouver and they have six children. Norman and Louise live on Vancouver Island and have three children.

THE TUTTLE GRAHAM FAMILY

Tuttle Graham, after leaving Centreville, Nova Scotia, homesteaded in the Fitzsimmons area and moved there in the late 1920's with his wife Minnie and small daughter, Arlene. Nearest neighbours were Remes Martels and Ed Whalens.

Arlene started school at Fitzsimmons while Isobel Horsely was teaching. As Arlene was an only child the Martel children and the Talbot girls made sure she got to school safely.



Tuttle and Minnie Graham, daughter Arlene.



Wilbur Graham and cousin Arlene Graham.

About 1934, Tuttle and his family moved to the Kleskun Lake area where Arlene continued her grade schooling.

In 1940 there was an addition to the family, when Tuttle and Minnie were blessed with their son, John. However sadness struck in 1943 when Minnie passed away at age 37. When John reached school age he attended the Kleskun Lake School until it closed.

Tuttle passed away in 1953 at the age of 57 years after leaving the farm to live in Grande Prairie.

MARY ANNE AND ROGER HALWA

On November 28th, 1943, with no one to assist her and taking care not to alarm the children in the next room, Mrs. Mary Podulsky gave birth to a blonde blue-eyed girl. So fair was this daughter, that later it didn't take much to convince the smaller brothers and sisters that, "Yes, Mom had really found her in the flour sack". After a long decision, since this was the ninth child to be born to Mary and Paul, she was named Mary Anne.

As I grew older, I found I had a love for music and learned to play the organ "by ear". This was not an easy task, as yet I wasn't going to school and was not very tall. Since this was a pump organ, I couldn't reach the pedals while sitting. I finally discovered I could stand on one foot, pump the organ with the other and play to my heart's content. Such a surprise was this to my older brothers and sisters, that they would bring school friends home with them to see for themselves. Their little sister could too play songs!

I started my first years of schooling at East Kleskun with Mrs. Edna Kzelchuck as the teacher from grades one to four. In all there were about 16 pupils from grades one to nine. This teacher had a heart of gold. Often on cold winter mornings, she had hot chocolate waiting for us, and at times made soup for lunch. Since the school was heated by a wood stove and the heat didn't circulate well, at times our lunch had to be partly thawed before eating. The hot soup was really appreciated.

We all rode to school on horse at that time. Tootsie, who I believe belonged to my brother Stanley, became my favorite horse to ride, even though she'd always play a few tricks on me.

Each spring, part of the last half mile of the two and one-half miles we rode, would be under water. Once each spring without any warning when Tootsie got out in the middle of this water, she would lie down and roll over in it. No amount of kicking or shouting would persuade her to do otherwise. Needless to say, Caroline, Barbara or myself (whichever two were riding at the time), got an unscheduled rather cold bath.

Evenings at home in the winter were filled with chores of filling the wood box, filling the snow barrel to melt for water, and helping feed the cows, pigs and horses. Once our chores were done, we could do as we pleased.

When there wasn't much snow and the ice was frozen, we'd play on the dugout. With branches for hockey sticks and a frozen horse track for a puck, we'd have our own version of a hockey game.

My brother George, (who could skate circles around us younger ones), would take our breath away as he skated toward the open water hole and then jump over it!

Especially on moonlit nights, Myron, Paul, Barb and I would take our toboggan and pieces of cardboard

for sleds, and head for the hill by the dugout. We found if our balance was good, even a scoop shovel worked well for a sleigh. But, if we lost our balance even a little, our fun filled ride would turn into a bulldozing snowplow. With the moon glistening on the crusted snow, what fun we had!

When the weather was too cold, we'd gather around the organ after supper, accompanied by Tony with his violin and sing songs. Mom's voice could be heard joining in from the kitchen and Dad tapping his foot in tune as he sat and listened.

Dad often told us stories of when he first came to live there as a bachelor. One of my favorite stories was when the rabbits were so plentiful. Dad and his bachelor friend would go down by the haystack at night with a sack. Once there, one of them would chase the rabbits around the stack and into the open sack which the other was holding around the next corner. Dad always put a lot of action into his stories which made us feel we were right there.

Mr. William Allen Adair was my teacher for grades five, six and seven. Though he was a very strict teacher, I have fond memories of this man as one of my best teachers.

During these years Gail Oe was my best friend. It was with Gail I smoked my first cigarette! Gail had been watching one of her older brothers go out to an old building on a hill at their place each day. We decided he must have something hidden there. Upon investigating, we found a package of cigarettes and matches. Surely he wouldn't miss one if we smoked it! We managed to smoke it with neither of us getting sick. However, on the way back to the house, we both were afraid that Gail's mom would smell smoke on us. After much conversing, since neither of us had any gum or candy, we decided to chew some poplar tree leaves. Oh, how bitter they were! Never again were we to try that!

The following year, 1956, we were to be bused to Bezanson School. This, then, would be the end of our horse back rides to and from school at East Kleskun.

It was during this year, I got hurt at school and could not ride the school bus over the rough roads. Since my sister, Julia Thompson, lived along the highway, it was decided I should stay with her.

There was never a dull moment in this year, with my niece Marlaine and nephews Murray and Laurie around. The boys were a real mischievous pair! Once, when coming back into the house, upon hearing much screaming and yelling from Marlaine, we found Laurie with a real gleam in his eye, and Murray with a pair of scissors in hand. They were both laughing to their hearts content in full pursuit of their sister's pigtails.

In the evening, once these three had settled down, since this was an older house, the mice would dare to venture out. As I layed in my bed, upstairs, I couldn't help but laugh as I listened to the rhythm of the "Whomp" of the broom and "Thump" of the bat. Julia's and Gordon's voices could be heard saying, "Did you get him? No, I missed! There he goes. Get him! Get him! Quiet, you'll wake the kids!" I'm sure many a mouse never returned because of fright.

The next three years, I stayed with my sister Velma Lancaster and family in Edmonton going to school. Since we used wood for cooking and heating the house, coal oil and high test lamps for light, and outdoor plumbing at home, this was quite a different way of life for me.

The following year I came back home to finish my schooling at St. Joseph's in Grande Prairie. Here I met Roger Halwa, my future husband.

Often I would go home to Bezanson for the weekends. By this time we had electricity and a phone with about twelve families on this line. My sister, Julia, and our house could hear one another's ring. It was during one of these weekends when Roger phoned. My niece Marlaine picked up the phone with a shriek of delight and said "Mom, it's Aunty and a boy!" She nearly got trampled as everyone made a dash for the phone, including my brother Alex, who was there at the time. The secret was out! Mary Anne had a boyfriend. Not for a long time was I to forget that phone call.

The following years, Roger went to Fairview Agricultural School. Absence makes the heart grow fonder, as the saying goes and in December, 1962, we were engaged.

Later, since both of our parents were farmers, we decided to be married late the next fall, hoping that by then all the crops would be in and fall work done. But, as luck would have it, this turned out to be a very wet summer. Our families, many of our future neighbors, aunts and uncles, found themselves taking a day off from their busy schedule to attend our wedding.



Mary Ann and Roger Halwa on their wedding day.

On November 7th, 1964, with the sun shining bright and Father McGillvery officiating, I became Mrs. Roger Halwa in St. Joseph's Church in Grande Prairie. A more beautiful day we couldn't have asked for.

Once again I was to live on a farm, even though I had often told Mom that "I'd never marry a farmer". Roger and I were to live on his father Ed's farm in the Fitzsimmon's District. This time, it was sheep I would learn to help with. I soon learned that where one sheep

goes, the rest soon follow especially when you have a pail in your hand.

Mr. and Mrs. Leon Menard were our closest neighbors at that time. Even though they were an older couple, they were very young at heart and loved to play cards. Often on cold winter nights, we would walk to their house to have them a game of cards. Since we all enjoyed ourselves and were hesitant to end the game, (especially if losing), it was many hours later before we'd return home.

On December 23rd, 1965, Roger and I were blessed with our first daughter, Karen Louise! Karen, was the first grandchild for Roger's parents and also the first great-grandchild for Grandpa and Grandma Stanley Halwa.



Kevin, Cathy and Karen in Banff National Park.

Fourteen months later February 28th, 1967, our second daughter Catherine Lynne was born. Then six years later on April 5th, 1973 our son Kevin Roger Lee was born.

Both Karen and Cathy started their schooling at the Bezanson school. They got on the bus at our gate.

During these years we continued living on the farm helping Roger's father out. Often on Sundays we'd go fishing or on family picnics. In the summer of 1974 we moved to an acreage near Grande Prairie where we presently live.

ED HALWA

In 1954, while brushing land for Alex Cameron in the Fitzsimmons District, I decided to get some land of my own. At that time there was a half section of school land and a half section of Hudson's Bay land available with just the road between. I batched in a small trailer while brushing and breaking some of my land. Later I was able to move out some buildings from Grande Prairie, and we fixed up a house to live in.

My wife Rose, and the children lived in town until they finished their schooling. Our daughter Doreen, chose nursing as a career and received her R.N. degree. She is married and lives at Fort McMurray.

Our son Roger attended agriculture school at Fairview and later helped me on my farm for awhile. He decided farming was not for him, so he and his wife, Mary Anne moved to Grande Prairie.

We grew registered forage seed and grains of which I entered in several fairs and won some prizes. We also had a large herd of beef cattle.

My wife and I continued to farm until the fall of 1975. We sold the farm to Pete Krahn and moved to Grande Prairie.

GORDON HEASLER

I was born on January 9th, 1929 at Gananoque, Ontario. Our family later moved to Lansdowne.

In the fall of 1949 I came with two friends to the Peace River Country on a harvest excursion program. I worked for Pearcy Clubine for some time then for Harry Beaver in the Bezanson district. During the winter I worked at different saw mills.

In May of 1951 I joined the Army and was stationed at Kingston, Ontario. On October 23rd when I had three weeks leave I returned to Bezanson for the happy occasion of my wedding to the former Isobel Stark. After the wedding and dance we left for Kingston. We took the plane to Edmonton and then travelled the rest of the way by train.



Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Heasler, Cathy and Terry.

On November 11th, 1951 while I was still in the Army, I left for Hanover, Germany where I stayed for one year. After coming back I stayed in the Army until April of 1954.

We rented the Coney farm in 1955 where we stayed until 1958 when we bought a half section, the S.½ 2-73-3-W6, from Oscar Albaniti. Later we bought the N.E. 3-73-3-W6 from George Laverick.

For a number of years I worked at lumber camps and farmed during the summer. In 1964 I drove the first high school bus from Bezanson to Grande Prairie and continued driving for seven years.

Belle and I have one son, Terry who was born on July 5, 1954. He went to the Bezanson School and the Grande Prairie High School. In 1973 he went to work for Proctor and Gamble in their machine shop south of Grande Prairie. Our daughter, Catherine was born on May 29, 1965 and is in grade six at the Bezanson school.

We still live on our farm at Bezanson and enjoy camping, fishing and curling.

PETER KEBALO

In August of 1933 harvesting jobs were very scarce around my home town of Slater which is about sixty miles north of Dauphin, Manitoba. My Mother gave me a cream cheque worth $4.57 which I cashed at the store and headed west. That was all the money I had so I did not spend it on a train ticket. I jumped on a freight train and went looking for a job stooking.

However at that time there were so many people looking for work the chances were very slim. I rode the freight every day and kept going farther west, hungry much of the time because even then $4.57 didn't last. As we were getting close to Edmonton the fellow who was sitting next to me on top of a boxcar mentioned that his home was in Rycroft, Alberta but that he went to Saskatchewan every year to harvest. Harvesting was earlier there and when he got back he could find work around Grande Prairie. So I thought I would take that chance as there was still 50c in my pocket. But I lost track of that fellow and I was on my own.

After arriving in Edmonton I walked quite a few miles to the Dunvegan Yards where the freight was to leave the next morning. But you couldn't just climb the freight in town, you had to walk out a mile or so to get away from the police. By that time the train was going fairly fast so you had to catch it on the go which is not easy. But I was pretty fair at it because I had been riding for two weeks.



Pete Kebalo — Cecil Labell.

Finally I landed in Rycroft and had to stay overnight because it was a divisional point. I went downtown and got into somebody's woodshed. It was half full of split wood so I crawled on top to have a little sleep. Since I had no blankets and the owner's dog barked at me all night I was glad when the morning came and I could climb on the old freight train again.

The train arrived in Grande Prairie about noon but as I didn't know anybody I walked to a vacant lot where the Hudson Bay is at present. I still had money in my pocket, 20c, and was hundreds of miles from home. On that vacant lot were some tables and broken down chairs and at least seventy-five other men all looking for work. They sat staring at the spikes sticking out of the wooden sidewalks. I was kind of worried.

But anyway there were quite a few cars parked along the sidewalk on that Saturday afternoon and in one of them was a man who caught my eye. He motioned for me to come over and said, "Are you looking for work?" After I assured him that I was he asked me to get in his car and come home with him. The man was Forest Faulk from east of Clairmont. On the way we talked about my travels. Then he told me to get a good rest, because he would be starting to cut grain on Monday. He said, "By the looks of you, you'll make a good stooker."

During the fall I made about fifty dollars stooking and hauling bundles. When this was finished the snow had come so I bought a few winter clothes and didn't have very much left.

At one time my Dad had told us about knowing a family from Manitoba who had moved to the Grande Prairie area. I found out where Nick Kochalyk lived, two and one-half miles north of Bezanson store, and struck out early one morning from Forest Faulks. Traffic was almost nil so I walked every foot of the way.

After visiting with the Nick Kochalyks for a few days I was about to return home when Nick asked me to stay and work for seven dollars a month and grub. I was very happy over a big deal like that so I stayed and when spring came he offered me fifteen dollars a month to help put in the crop. That sounded good to me. I walked behind five horses pulling six sections of diamond harrows from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. A harrow cart would have been a lot better, but most people couldn't afford an extra horse and harrow cart. Anyway, I liked the Peace River country more and more, so I thought I could get myself a homestead. I inquired at the land office in Grande Prairie, and they told me that I would have to be a resident of Alberta for three years. So I got a job working in a sawmill for Jack Fitzpatrick. He was a very nice fellow and we got along well. Jack was hard up like the rest of the people in this country. Everybody worked for wages paid in lumber at $1.25 a day. Even Jack didn't have much money at that time, but he managed to supply the camp with the best food. I'll never forget Mrs. Bill Mayne, the cook, and she was a good one. Jack Fitzpatrick had some other cooks off and on. One spring he had a fairly young lady cooking. She got better later

on, but at first the pancakes were so tough they were just like a Good Year tube or tire.

I slept in the bunkhouse with Roy Tink at that time. Roy is still living in Clairmont and we used to work together quite a bit at the sawmill. Anyway, our bunkhouse roof leaked very badly so Roy and I talked things over one morning, we put some of these pancakes in our pockets and in the evening Roy and I fixed the roof with them. You know the bunkhouse never leaked all summer!

In 1936, after I had resided in Alberta for three years, I homesteaded in the Fitzsimmons District, I started cutting bush with an axe, that was the best bush cutter at that time. I cut and piled 20 acres that winter.

When I moved to the homestead, I was batching. It was pretty grim.

I had lots of fun that winter of 1937. The neighbors had a caboose and a team of horses and a bunch of us would go to almost anyone's place for a surprise party. I used to play a violin for dances with Phylis Love, Harold Ford and Nick Smashnuk. Phylis Love moved to Victoria, B.C. and then her sister Betty took over for her on the piano. Betty is now Mrs. Fred Ford and lives at Bezanson. I give credit to those two girls for helping me learn new tunes.

In 1940, I bought a truck from Claude Fitzpatrick and did some grain and lumber hauling. In 1941, I bought a new 3 ton truck, but '41 was a very wet fall. The grain started to sprout in the stooks. Every bundle on the stook had a great big green patch the size of a cowboy hat, so I didn't make much money hauling grain that fall. I almost lost the truck because I couldn't make the payments.

In March of 1941, the Alaskan Highway was started. I made a few trips from Dawson Creek, B.C. to Fort Nelson, B.C. which helped me make the payments on the truck.

In 1942, I married Alberta Vinet, formerly of Fitzsimmons. We have two children, Karen and Bobby, both of Vancouver, B.C. I was in the Armed Forces for almost three years. In 1945, we bought a farm in Teepee Creek, Alberta. I farmed and trucked grain for many years. I got into the sawmill business in 1947. I made a sawmill on wheels so I could move it easily from place to place. It was possibly the first one of its kind in Canada or in North America. My neighbor Don Brown, originally from Teepee Creek, had the tractor big enough to suit the job, so we worked together sawing lumber all over the country. When I was making the first sawmill, people used to come around to look at something new. Later, I remodeled it into a self-propelled sawmill. It was more economical to move. I sold the sawmill outfit in 1962 and sold the farm in Teepee Creek. My wife and I took a homestead in the High Level area. We moved there in 1964 and still reside there.

PETE AND HELEN KRAHN

Pete and Helen have three daughters, Rhonda, Sheila and Sharon. They sold their irrigation farm at Rainier, Alberta, and purchased the Ed Halwa farm at Bezanson. They moved in on November 11, 1975.

Thus far, except for more snow, the winters are the same as at Rainier they feel. The summer provided moisture for crops in a different manner than they were normally used to.



Pete and Helen Krahn, daughters Sheila, Sharon and Rhonda.

DICK LAVERICK

Dick Laverick came to Canada from Whitby, Yorkshire, England in 1928. He worked in Foam Lake, Saskatchewan for a year and a half.

His oldest son, George joined him there, and in 1929 they went to he Peace River country to look for land, finally settling in the East Kleskun area.

In 1930, two daughters, Annie and Lizzie, and another son, Jack, arrived from England.



Dick Laverick.

Some years later, he moved to the North Bezanson area, where he farmed until 1959. He then moved to Grande Prairie, where he lived until he passed away on August 3, 1976 at the age of 87.

Dick enjoyed gardening and always grew vegetables, raspberries and strawberries in his garden in Grande Prairie. Many a caller went home with a nice bowl of berries.

GEORGE LAVERICK

I came to Canada in May, 1929 from Whitby, Yorkshire, England. I was 18 at the time. I joined my father at Foam Lake, Saskatchewan, where we both continued to work until October, when we went to the Peace River country to look for land. We looked over a considerable area — from Debolt to Dawson, Creek, B.C. — but decided to settle in the East Kleskun area on the S.½ 35-72-4. My father farmed there for a few years, while I went to work for a neighboring farmer, Al Alderman. I continued to work for him most of the time for the next five years. In 1930, I filed on a homestead in the Fitzsimmons area and managed to turn 20 acres of solid bush into crop land in whatever spare time I could manage. It was slow, hard work brushing with an axe. I had Wes Brewer do the breaking, as he had a tractor and a breaking plough.



Mr. and Mrs. George Laverick, sons Jim, Keith, Bud, Jack.

About 1940, I gave up the homestead and bought land from George Amereaux. In 1944, I sold that farm to John Saramaga and bought Alex Love's farm where we still reiide. It is the S.½ 3-73-3. We acquired another half section and raised cattle and hogs as well as growing grain for many years. I have now sold all of this land except the home half section.

In February, 1939, I married Marguerite Fitzpatrick and we raised a family of four sons, Keith, Jack, Jim and Bud. They all attended Bezanson School although Keith and Jack went to Fitzsimmons School for several years. Jim also took Grade One there. They went to St. Joseph's school in Grande Prairie for high school.

The boys are all married now. Keith lives in Vanderhoof, B.C. Jack is in Stettler, Alberta and Jim and Bud live in Grande Prairie, Alberta.

Keith is the father of two daughters, Shauna and Wendy. Jack has two children, Michael and Jennifer. Jim has two children, Dayna and Chad. Bud has one son, Jay.

CECIL LEBBELL

I was one of the original settlers of the Fitzsimmons area of the Peace River Country. It was in the year of 1928, the month being September that I put my name on the dotted line thus acquiring the S.W.¼ of Section 22-73-3 as my homestead and future home.

Well it was quite a jungle when I first saw it, in fact it was almost impossible to get through at that time. After a big brush fire went through in October it was relatively clear. The usual homestead duties were carried out with the erection of a shack of kinds in order to hold on until some clearing and breaking was accomplished. In 1929 a better log cabin was built on the northwest corner of the quarter and also adjacent to two other parties, namely Mr. and Mrs. Soloman Graham and Mr. Dexter Wagner, so consequently someone had the foresight to name the settlement "Punkin Center".

At that time there was a cabin on practically every quarter. After a few years school was built and that provided us with a place to have dances, etc., which I must say were well attended and especially Christmas Concerts. This was a main attraction in those days.

As the main settlement of the area was done in the 1930's they were of the most primitive that one could imagine, namely clearing was done by hand and the breaking by horses but we seemed to survive somehow until times got better.

There was also a Post Office in the area, the mail being hauled from Bezanson once a week for which I guess we were lucky, that also provided another meeting place on Saturday evenings.

I later sold my land in the Fitzsimmons District and moved to the Clairmont area. At this time I have retired and spend my time living in England for part of the year and in the Grande Prairie area for the remainder.

ALEX LOVE

In 1930, Alex and Sarah Jane Love with four of their children, came west from Manitoba to the Peace River country. The two oldest girls, Ruth and Florence remained in Winnipeg.

The first year the Loves were here, they lived in Grande Prairie, and while there bought a farm four miles north of where Bezanson store now stands.

There were only twenty-five acres under cultivation, so Andy Love, Alex's brothr came from Manitoba to help him. He and Alex spent that first winter building a one room shack and brushing.

In June of that year, Muriel returned to Winnipeg, — and the rest of the family moved to the farm. Sleeping accommodations were a problem, so until an addition was built to the house that fall some had to sleep in a granary. The house was small, and heated with a kitchen range and wood heater.

Good drinking water was at a premium, but Andy always solved the dilemma by digging another well. There were five, possibly six wells to his credit. Andy stayed with the family for some years, leaving to live at Kelowna with his brother Jack. Andy died in 1953.

Farming was done with horses of course, with the addition of a team of mules, one of which was balky, a source of frustration to Mr. Love, but amusement to others.

In 1935, Tom Rice, a close neighbour, left for Goldfields. Loves rented his farm, and moved to the big log house there. Muriel came home from Winnipeg about then, stayed a few months, then went to Clairmont to work. She married Bill Lea, an elevator agent there. They have two daughters, Phyllis and Frances. The Leas live at Coombs, B.C.

It was about this time, also that Marguerite Meiklejohn came to teach at Fitzsimmons. She possessed a great ability for organizing social events in the district, and was responsible for many of the skating and house parties which everyone enjoyed so much.

Loves were fortunate to have a piano. Many very pleasant evenings were spent with accompanying banjo, violin, or just singing.

Phyllis went to Winnipeg in 1938, where she met and married Jack Whittall. She is residing near Parkesville, B.C. The Whittalls have one daughter, Jane.

Mrs. Love, being an excellent seamstress, was constantly making or remaking garments. Her talent was called on many times by family and neighbours, especially in the rough years.

The family moved back to their own place in 1941, and lived there until Mrs. Love's death in 1944.

Elliott, Phyllis and Betty all attended Fitzsimmons school, either walking or riding the two and one-half miles. Elliott enlisted in 1940, and after discharge went to Calgary, Kelowna, and eventually to Vancouver, where he and his wife Grace now reside. They have a daughter Barbara and son Robert. Betty is the only one to remain in the area. She is married to Fred Ford and living at Bezanson. They have one daughter Anne.

Mr. Love sold the farm to George Laverick in 1944 and retired to Kelowna. He passed away at Vernon, B.C. in 1971.

CECIL McEWEN

Cecil came to the Fitzsimmons District in 1935 and took a homestead on the bank of Kleskun Creek, north of Tom Sorensens. He worked for Wes Brewer in 1936-1937 and later for Tom Sorensen and then left the country.

ROSS McKINNON STORY — as told by Arthur McKinnon

It was on March 28, 1928, that my Dad arrived in Grande Prairie from Vancouver. He was looking for a homestead, and in a few days he met someone who told him about a half section that was eighteen miles east of Sexsmith that appeared quite good. Later he homesteaded it and wrote to Vancouver for Mother and myself to come out. As Dad had not had time to build a house, he made some arrangements for us to stay at Abe Graham's, a farmer in the area.



Ross McKinnon.

It was about thirty miles from Grande Prairie to our homestead — a good day's drive for a team of horses. We drove out to Pat Rooney's store at Bezanson, then straight out north to Loves' corner, a mile east to Tom Rices' house — no doubt we stopped there for a while — then we went north. There was no road and the trail went through Cooneys' and Brewers' yard, then swung back to the cut line, straight to Grahams'.

About the middle of April, that spring, Dad, Mother, and myself went down to the new homestead with all our furniture and a tent in a wagon. When we got to the hill, where Dad later built our house, they piled all our worldly goods in a heap and laid the tent over it. They set fire to the grass for a fire guard, and burned over most of the hill. Then Dad tied the horses to a tree and we walked the mile and a half to the river bank to see the river and the land off to the east.

After looking at the view, we walked back to the horses and found that the wind had risen from a new direction and burned all our furniture and tent. Things must have looked quite grim for Dad then, not only had everything burned, but his last ten dollars had gone to the land Commissioner for the homestead. Fortunately, Dad had a friend, Ab Graham, who took us in, helped Dad get the logs out for our house, and helped him build it.

At the time we arrived, Ab Graham had well established his homestead; with a log house, barn and blacksmith shop. He had been badly wounded in the First World War, and after being discharged, he trapped up in the headwaters of the Wapiti and Parship River.

In my recent visits to Peace River over the Hart Highway, the road crosses the Parsnip River at Windy Point, and I always think of Ab Graham and the long trip it must have been to walk from Fitzsimmons through the miles of brush in the fall, and travel back down the Wapiti in the spring with his fur on a raft.

The Sorenson family were living just east of

Grahams. There was Inar, Tom, Vern, their sister, Margaret, and Mr. Sorenson, their Father. They each had a quarter section and they also had a team of horses, (Steamboat and Charlie). They lived in a little log house. Mother and Dad often went there to visit or play cards. I would look at the funnies (Mutt and Jeff) in their Danish paper with the Katzen-Jammer kids. Unfortunately they only spoke Danish.

After Dad got our house built he went to work for Bill Harris, on Kleskun Hill. Bill Harris had a large, well-equipped and well run farm. It was the first I had ever seen. It was about that time I began to realize just how wide the gap was between a homesteader and a farmer. There were also two very pretty girls called Ella and Flossie. We were there only a short time. When harvesting started Vern Sorenson was on the threshing crew. In no time at all he had married Flossie and they moved to their homestead two miles west of Grahams', where they became successful farmers.

It was late fall when Dad finished working at Harris and we came back to the homestead for our first winter.



Ross and Hilda McKinnon, early 30's.

By spring the depression was on and money was very scarce on the McKinnons' homestead, but by that fall Dad had managed to get two ten acre fields cleared and broke up. We were getting short of food about the end of June, so Dad took his old Army rifle and our last two shells and went hunting. I followed along through the brush until we came to the canyon east of our house. We crept along and looked over the bank; there was a huge cinnamon colored bear walking up the hill across a little gully about two hundred feet from us. Dad took careful aim and shot. The bear rolled down the hill into the gully. I heard him say, "Got him!" Then I saw the bear get up and start up the hill toward us, and Dad fired his last shell. Then he said "run", and run I did. We never saw the bear again. It must have just blundered towards us and ran back into the bush, but he sure scared us.

That summer, Jim and Ted Cooney took their homesteads north of us. And one day we heard an engine on the road south of our house. It was Ira McLaughlin coming with his tractor to start breaking on the Cooney quarter. It was the first farm tractor I had ever seen — there's no doubt it was the first in Fitzsimmons. Most of the farmers were still working their fields with horses.

The next summer Dad worked at Stan and Bob Fentons'. Mother and I went with him. It was then that I met the Moorehouses. They lived about half a mile north of Fentons' farm house. Mr. Moorehouse homesteaded about a mile from the place where the Fitzsimmons school was later built.



Ross and Arthur breaking on the homestead.

About this time I discovered a place that was a source of pleasure for me, for the rest of the time we lived in the Peace River. There was a creek that started by our house, that developed into a deep canyon by the time it flowed a mile east, where it gave a sharp turn — a point of land that protected the lower parts of this canyon from west wind and trapped warm air as the sun created, it shining on the north banks. The result of this unique climate was, that there were many flowers and plants growing there that were not found anywhere else in the district. About the middle of March, patches of bare ground would start to show on the hills that sloped toward the sun. By middle April, the bluebirds arrived and it was possible to find the little bumps of prarie crocuses, even the grass was different. There was prairie wool and spear grass, wild onions and ragweed. On the dry banks, blue sage grew near the bottom of the hills and wild Clematis wound around the bushes. I spent most of my free time here, climbing around the hills looking for bird nests or sitting on the grass while the breeze bent the wild flax — their bright blue flowers waving and bobbing while watching for moose swimming in the river on the hot summer days.

Sometime in the early thirties, a couple homesteaded the half section south of ours. This was

Mr. and Mrs. Struhan. They cleared and broke ten acres, and after that, set out to make themselves as comfortable as possible with the resources that were available to them on their homestead. Mr. Struhan started to build his house that summer and took great pains to make it warm and comfortable. He had a whipsaw and he took it down into the creek behind his house and whipsawed all the lumber from some spruce and carried it out on his back. The house, itself, was a frame of poplar logs, coated solid, with mud inside and out. It was painted or whitewashed inside where the mud was as smooth as plaster and was always warm, even on the coldest day.

Mrs. Struhan had a cuckoo clock hanging on the wall. Whenever we went to visit them, I always liked to hang around until the cuckoo came out and called the time. The Struhans had a team of oxen that they used to work their farm. He built a barn of poplar logs for them, and thatched the roof with slough hay. This was the only thatched roof I have ever seen in Canada. In 1957, their house was still there, but unfortunately the barn had been burned. I think they very accurately assetted the financial possibility of homesteading and made the wisest choice.

About the same time, the Struhans were building up their homestead, a rancher was setting up across the river from us. This was Pat McCann. He called at our place one day after he had crossed the river with his horses, slipping out of the saddle and hanging onto its tail after it started to swim, he looked very much like a cattleman should. He was the only man I ever saw who carried a six gun.

PETER McNALLY STORY — March, 1977 — Bezanson

Peter McNally, born October 26, 1892, served in W.W. I then came to Canada from Mary Port, England. He was joined later by Mary Jane Studholme and they were married, making their home and farming in the Drake and Lockwood area in Saskatchewan, where the first six children were born; Dorothy, December 19, 1920, Stephen, May 19, 1922, Terrance, 1923, Bob, 1924, one deceased, Rose Jubilee, as an infant and Andrew, 1928.



Mrs. Peter McNally, Winnie and Tommy.

Peter and Mary decided to come west with the five children in April, 1929 arriving by train in Grande Prairie, where we stayed in the old immigration hall for ten days, the beginning of a hard tough life. We then headed out to the Norwegian's, old Han's homestead east of Grande Prairie's nuisance grounds. We salvaged a case of currants that were very dry, but usable if soaked in water, from the nuisance grounds. Another family were living in the homestead house so Peter and Mary turned a hayrack over and put a tent over it, where we lived for one month. We then moved to Johnny McDonald's place with a team from Mr. Sawaskie, where we stayed the rest of the summer and all the next winter. Dorothy went to Five Mile school. The school was so crowded the rest of us couldn't attend. Peter worked and brushed for Johnny McDonald, blowing stumps out with dynamite.

We then moved to Jimmy James' place in 1931, Steve and Dorothy attended school at Lindsay. The home shack was built while staying there, on their homestead two miles east and four miles north of Pat Rooney's general store. The shack built on the road allowance, had a sod roof and hewed poplars for a floor. When a knife fell from the table it disappeared through a crack, so you had to lift the poplar to find it.

George Amireaux ploughed up a garden spot and we had good gardens. There was lots of wild fruit. Meat wasn't easy to get, so we caught a fawn deer and raised it until it was a yearling, then butchered it.

We hadn't much to go on. Peter got six Barred Rock hens and a rooster from Napoleon Perrin. One night a skunk got after the chickens, Steve and his mother chased the skunk but they were too late, the skunk got them. Steve went to school the next day but was sent home to bury his clothes.

By 1932, Fitzsimmons school was built, we had 4½ miles to walk to school. Rabbits were plentiful, Steve shot them with a sling shot. They were delicious. Here three more children were born: Winnie in 1932, Tommy in 1934 and Barney in 1938.

Peter got relief and spent the summer months working on the road earning it. He got $7.50 per month. Peter wasn't supposed to get tobacco with relief money but Pat Rooney used to give it to him and just added on another pound of bulk peanut butter. Those days you took your own container and Pat filled it for you. Peter bought five pounds of peanut butter at a time and thinned it with skimmed milk to make it go farther.

School was so far away, that Peter got a Soldier's Grant. This place was six miles north and two miles east of the store. There were no graded roads, just cut lines that never drifted in winter. Peter got a set of logs from Fitzpatrick's timber berth and built another log shack, a little larger than the one on the homestead. From here we had only three miles to walk to school.

Peter went to work in the Wapiti Coal Mines for Nick Snider. Mary stayed home and roughed it with the Big Eight.

Water was hard to come by at the McNally's too, it had to be carried ½ a mile up the river bank. The new land was all brush, so we brushed seven acres by hand and got Abner Graham to break it with five horses.



Bill Davis and Peter McNally.

For pay he got a two year old heifer called 'Gracie.' We got seven acres worked up and seeded it to Garnet wheat. That spring, Steve went into the duck business. He raised 25 ducks from one pair. One early morning the ducks found the seven acres of Garnet wheat. Peter came home and wondered where the crop went, and had to be told the ducks got it. The 25 ducks were loaded in the wagon box and sold in Grande Prairie for $12.50 for the load.

We bought our first team of horses in 1934 and farmed with one team for a few years.

Moose were plentiful then, you didn't need a license. Once Peter and Steve went for seed grain, using a stoneboat on skids and would have to lift the stoneboat over the stumps as they went along. They spotted two calf moose, caught them and loaded them on top of the grain and took them home. They had tough luck with one, the heifer calf stepped on it and it died. The other was raised to a long yearling, then butchered for their winter's meat supply.

When World War II broke out Peter answered the call, joining the Veteran's Guards. Things were good then, Mary got a good allowance. The family started to depart, Steve joined the Army also.

Mary, left with only four of the family, was able to save a little money and bought a quarter from John Roberts in Bezanson. In 1943 Peter returned and carried on farming, with the aid of the VLA purchased Henry Tripp's farm and some farm machinery among which was a small Farmall A tractor.

He went to town one day with it, got stewed up, then



rolled the Farmall over on himself and almost met his Waterloo. A drill was bought in 1946 and is still in operation on Andrew's farm.

Peter and Mary retired in 1954, buying a small house in Grande Prairie from Bill Boyd.

Andrew and Joan bought the Tripp place where they farmed until they bought the Jack Mitchell quarter in 1968, where they are now living.

Mary carried on in local activities and church work. Peter enjoying himself by going to the race





Mr. and Mrs. Leander Menard and family. Wilfred, Armyna, Elsie, and Exeria.

track and betting on the horses, until his death on December 23, 1972. Mary lived alone at the Aurora Court in Grande Prairie until her death, August, 1976 at the age of 82.

Well that's it, even though it was tough, it was a great experience and a happy life.

LEANDRE AND MARIE MENARD

They were both born in Glen Robertson, Ontario, Leandre in 1896 and Marie Brunet in 1896. They were married in 1918 in Lochiel, Ontario.

After several years of working away from home the young couple decided to move to the Grande Prairie area since two of his brothers were already here. They arrived April 15, 1929 with their four children after travelling on an excursion train for four days and five nights. They settled in the Bezanson area and the children went to Bezanson and Lindsay schools. They also lived in the East Kleskun district for several years and later bought a house and moved it to the Fitzsimmons district.

Their eldest daughter, Exerie, married Carl Welters in 1942 and they made their home in Sexsmith. They have three daughters. Mina married Doug Doerkson and they have five children. Carol married Dennis Haduck and they have three children. Phyllis is married to Allen Johnston and they have two children.

Leandre and Marie's second daughter married Paul Wold in 1943 and they also lived in Sexsmith with their six children. Melvin married Diane Gaunt: they have three children. Marie married Richard Rycroft; they have four children. Marilyn is married to Tom Chreneck and they have three children. Morris married Cathy Nelson and Mavis and Marcia are still at home.

Their son, Wilfred, married Grace Norton in 1946.

Their third daughter, Armyna, married Terrance McNally in 1945 and they have five children. Marlene married Melvin Schmitke and they have two children. Alvera is married to Harvey Schmitke with two children. Gloria married Theodore Schmitke and they have three children. Their son, Elliott, is married to Cherry Paulton with four children.

Leandre passed away June 13, 1967. Mrs. Menard lives in her daughter's yard. (Mrs. Terrance McNally). She has thirteen grandchildren and thirty-two great-grandchildren.

CHARLES AND RUTH MILNER

Charles and Ruth Milner were married at Three Hills on February 15, 1928. Moving with all our stock, machinery, and household furnishings by a government rail car to Grande Prairie; we had a young man travel with the boxcar to take care of the stock.

We rented the Jim Storm farm for two years, then moved to the Bill Storm farm, until the spring of 1933 where we moved to our homestead at Fitzsimmons.

Our first child, a son was born August 13, 1930 in the Grande Prairie Hospital.

We were both quite active in the U.F.A. and U.F.W.A.

Our daughter was born on November 5, 1933. We started out for Grande Prairie, but didn't get there. Pat was born at Fred Vinet's home. It was quite an event, as the Vinet's were having a birthday party for their son Frank, who was 14 that day.



Charlie Milner son Billy, daughter Pat.



Ruth Milner on left.



Winter travel 1937.



Charlie Milner.



Charlie Milner (woodpile).

We had no car until the late thirties. Having the Post Office, we needed a way of getting the mail through as my husband hauled it from Bezanson, hence we had the caboose which we used for all our getting around in the winter. The caboose had a stove in it which made travelling quite comfortable. The car wasn't much good for getting around the district in the thirties as the roads were not that good.

We were quite active in the district. My husband, as well as having the Post Office, was the Secretary for



Fitzsimmons Post Office — Bertha Proffitt, Margaret Vinet, Betty Love.



First Fitzsimmons Post Office — as it is today.



Stella Becker (teacher 1934), Patty Milner.

the Fitzsimmons School. Our home was quite a gathering place Saturday evening, while waiting for the mail, there was one mail day a week.

My husband joined the Army in the summer of 1940. I moved with him to Camrose, Alberta, where I have lived since. My husband and I both started work after the war, with the Alberta Government, at Rosehaven in Camrose. He was the accountant there for sixteen and one-half years, when he passed away. I continued to work for twenty-two years, as head seamstress. I am now retired and living in Camrose.

My husband passed away in July, 1963.

My son married on September 1, 1955. They have three sons and one daughter and live in Ottawa. He is a business analyst for Indian Affairs with the Federal Government.

My daughter married on April 13, 1963. Her married name is Robinson. She nursed for ten years before she got married. They live in Calgary and have two daughters and one son.

DOUGLAS AND MARY MOREHOUSE

Douglas Morehouse was born in Digby County, Nova Scotia. He came west and homesteaded on the east side of Clairmont Lake in about 1911 or 1912.

Mary Amanda Twombly was born in Cheyenne, Wyoming, U.S.A. and came to Alberta with her parents. They homesteaded land which is the present town site of Clairmont.



Wedding Day — Douglas and Mary Moorehouse, 1916. Left to right — Alberta Trombly, Tuttle Graham, Mary and Douglas Moorehouse, Evelyn and Ritchie McRae.

Douglas and Mary were married in 1917 and later homesteaded on the N.E. 15-73-3-W6 in the Fitzsimmons District. They, like the other families in the district, raised their seven children during the hard times of the thirties. Mary was a very cheerful person, always making the best of things.

The older children attended school at Kleskun Hill, East Kleskun and Fitzsimmons, while the younger ones attended Fitzsimmons before the family moved away. Gordon went out to work when he was fifteen and so did not see much of his younger brother and sisters.

Gordon lives at Mile 22 on the Alaska Highway, is married and has one son, Gary. Cora, who lives in Kamloops, has one son, Keith. Her husband died in

1976. Thelma lives in Victoria, B.C., is married and has five children. Amy is also married and lives at Mara, B.C. One of her three children, a son, died in an accident in 1964. Edith lives in Prince George, B.C., with her husband and four children. Charles, who lives in Quesnel, B.C., is married and has three children. The youngest of the Morehouse children, Edna of Spalding, Saskatchewan is married and has two children.

Mary Morehouse passed away several years ago. Douglas is living in Viking, Alberta at present.

JAMES WILLIAM PALLANT

I was born in Beddgelert, Wales on December 31, 1903. I came to Canada in March of 1924 and went to work for George Tribe at Jenner, Alberta for spring work. I then moved on to Calgary in June working for William Deane-Freeman of Okotoks, then Andrew Giffen, also of Okotoks and finally Lynn Orton of De-Winton.

I came to Grande Prairie in June of 1928 and went to work for Rowe Thompson of Bezanson for the summer. I then filed on a homestead in the Fitzsimmons District, the N.W. 10-73-3-W6.

I had no home when I first got my land so I stayed with my neighbor, John Parent, while I built a shack. John had filed on the S.E. 16-73-3-W6, a quarter section which I later bought.

I did my own cooking but I bought butter from Mrs. Vinet for years. One year I cut brush for Al Alderman for a cow. Times were getting harder so I kept a few herd of cattle and pigs. I farmed in the summer later and went to sawmills and plywood camps in the winter.

I sold out in 1973 and now reside in Grande Prairie.

ART AND JANET PEEL

Art was raised in the Kew District, near Millarville and Turner Valley. I was raised near Turner Valley. Art took over the family farm when his dad died in 1963. Our three children were born while we were in the Kew District. They are Lorna born in 1965, Cathleen born in 1966, and James born in 1969. We sold most of our farm at Kew and bought 10 quarters (the Vinet and Repetowsky places) from Lud and Bertha Wilson in 1973. Art's brother Gordon and his family moved onto this farm at Easter, 1973. Art and I came in July, 1973. Gordon and Ann have five children, they are Sidney, Nancy, Janet, David and Susan. Gordon and Ann moved back to Windsor, Ontario, in October, 1974. That is where Ann is from.

ALBERT AND MAUDE PROFFITT

They were both born in Kansas, U.S.A., Albert in 1880 and Maude Simmons in 1884. They were married June 24, 1903. They farmed a few years, then decided to come to Canada in 1911. They arrived in Calgary on their 8th anniversary, just in time for the first Calgary Stampede. They worked for a farmer at Cheadle, east of Calgary for several years, until they were able to buy a section of land at Strathmore, 30 miles east of Calgary. They moved there in 1919 and farmed for ten years, getting hailed out seven of the ten years. So in 1929, they sold out and moved to the Peace River country and homesteaded in the Fitzsimmons District. In



Albert and Maude Proffitt, 1912.



Albert and Maude Proffitt, 1913.



Mildred and Bertha Proffitt (1925).



Homestead days.

1945, they took over the Post Office which they operated for several years. Mrs. Proffitt hauled the mail from Bezanson every Saturday. In 1954, they moved to Bezanson. Mr. Proffitt passed away February 1965. So Mrs. Proffitt bought a house in Grande Prairie and lives alone. At 93, she is still able to care for herself. She spends each winter at the coast with her daughter.

Albert and Maude have two children, Mildred and Bertha. Mildred married Wesley Brewer in 1936, and moved to Vancouver in 1945. They have four children; Dennis and Irma have two children; Gary and Maureen have two children; Marilyn and Dennis Munroe have two children; Jenny and Gaiton Morin have one child.

Bertha enlisted in the Army (CWAC) and served three years, where she met and married Jeff Dillabough from Ontario, in 1945. After the war, they came back to Fitzsimmons and built a house on land Bertha had homesteaded in 1938. Jeff got three more quarters of land surrounding this.

Bertha and Jeff had seven children. Geraldine died in 1962 at the age of 9. In 1966 Deborah married Rod Klimp from Sunset House. They live in Sexsmith and have four children. Murray married Sharon Jantz in 1974 and they live on a farm north of Debolt. Russell married Laurel Christensen in 1974. They live in Clairmont and have two children. Neil married Sylvia Jantz in 1975. They live in Grande Prairie and have one child. Rhonda married Brian Sailer in 1976 and they live at Fraser Lake, B.C. Brenda married Gordon Sandul in 1976. They live in Spirit River and have one child.

Mrs. Proffitt has 10 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

JURY AND OLGA REPETOWSKI

Jury Repetowski filed on the N.W. 18-73-2-W of 6 in the late 20's while his brother, Jack, took the quarter directly north. Jury with his wife, Olga, farmed here until they bought the S.W. 14-73-3 from Pete Kebalo



Geo Repatroski.

sometime in the 40's. Their children attended the Fitzsimmons and Bezanson schools. Later the family sold the farm to Lud Wilson and moved to Grande Prairie.

Jury and Olga had six children, Elsie, Leon, David, Timmy, Billy and Joey.

THOMAS WOODOM RICE

Tom Rice was born at International Falls, Minnesota, U.S.A., on March 29, 1893. When Tom was a



Tom Rice and grandson.

young boy, he came with his parents to Emo, Ontario from the U.S.A. After leaving Ontario, Tom joined the Army in Edmonton. He went overseas in 1916 with the Edmonton Forestry Corps. While overseas, he met Suzanne Chabau, who was born in Paris, France on September 13, 1900.

Tom and Suzanne were married after the war was over, although neither one could speak each other's language, but that didn't seem to be a problem. They came back to Canada following the end of the War and settled on a homestead in the Peace River District in 1919 on the S.W.½ 2-73-3-W6 at Bezanson.

Hardships were many, especially for Mrs. Rice who was raised in Paris and had never been anywhere till then, i.e., by starting off with a team of oxen. Their first child, May, was born at the homestead. Tom had to drive to Grande Prairie with a team of horses for Dr. O. Brian. As it was, he almost lost his wife and daughter. The other two girls, Lucille and Susie were born at Grande Prairie, plus one son, Rene.

In 1921, Mrs. Rice's mother, Mrs. Chabau, a widow, and daughter Margaret came from France to live with Tom and Suzanne. Mrs. Chabau settled at Bezanson and Margaret married Zotique Menard.



Mrs. Rice, Lucille, Rene, May.

After 30 years on the homestead, Tom and Suzanne and family decided to sell their homestead and move to a boom town known as Goldfields, Saskatchewan, now known as Uranium City. While there, their second son, Francis was born, Suzanne having to fly to Edmonton for his birth.

Tom worked in the gold mines and there he was nicknamed "Mush" because of his means of transportation there; dog sled in the winter, boats in the summer.

It was here at Goldfields that their oldest daughter, May made quite a name for herself by flying from cabin to cabin doing house work. When reporters from the U.S.A. came to interview May, they gave her the name "The Flying Housemaid of the North". May had many offers for pictures, even from Repleys. Being quite young, May turned all this down. May finally left Goldfields, returned to the Peace River country and married Pete Hawryluk of Bezanson. She later moved to Prince George, B.C. where she died at the early age of 49.



Lucille, Susie, May Rice.



Paul Menard, May Rice, Mrs. Z. Menard, Lucille Rice, Rene Rice, Mrs. Chaboue, Susie Rice.

After four years at Goldfields, the Rice family moved back to Edmonton. While in Edmonton, Tom took up a training course as a fitter. On completion of this course, Tom was sent to Ontario. After Tom got settled, he sent for his wife, two sons and one daughter. The other two daughters remained in Alberta. Tom and Suzanne worked in the same plant during the War, Tom as fitter and Suzanne as an inspector.

Tom later went to work for a friend who owned his own shop. Shortly afterwards, he retired. Suzanne passed away in Edmonton in January, 1969 at the age of 69, while visiting her daughter Lucille. Tom passed away in Hamilton in January, 1974 at the age of 81. The children, Lucille, Susie, Rene and Francis remain living in Hamilton.

HANS RUCH

My husband, Hans Ruch was born in Berne, Switzerland on June 10, 1898, and I, Annie Ruch (Albus), was born in Zurich, on August 3, 1898.

We were married on August 1, 1919, in Zurich, Switzerland. Our first two children, Eva and Charlotte, were born there also.

In search of a new life, we emigrated, to Canada, in the summer of 1922. We sailed over on the ocean liner, Britannia, which struck an iceberg enroute. The passengers were very cold and frightened. We had to don our warmest clothing. Lifeboats were, immediate-

ly, made ready and an S.O.S. sent out. The crew worked well into the night to repair the ship. Morning found us surrounded by other small vessels which had responded to the distress call.

From the port of Halifax, Hans, I and the children took the train to Winnipeg. Enroute we had to pass through a prairie fire. The smoke was so dense that Charlotte suffered eye injury. She had to be hospitalized and kept in a dark room for three days.

Our first stay, in Canada, was on a large Aberdeen-Angus ranch near Brandon, Manitoba. Hans was employed as foreman, on the ranch, for a year. I did a lot of cooking for the other hired men. I was very unhappy with the cold weather and homesick for our old mode of life in Switzerland. I was horrified, when the hired hand brought me moccasins for the children's footwear. I told him to exchange them for leather shoes; this proved to be a mistake.

Restlessness, again, got the best of my husband and we moved to Battleford, Saskatchewan. Our first Canadian child, Lenora (Mrs. Tom Fogle of Smokey Heights,) was born there.

We worked on a large grain farm at the beginning of the dusty drought years. The crops never grew taller than six inches. In the fall, there wasn't enough money to pay the hired men, so we had to move farther west to Toefield, Alberta.

There, we spent several years working on a dairy farm. Our fourth daughter was born there; Olive, (Mrs. Lester Strid, of Bad Heart).

We decided to move to the Peace River country in 1927, after reading, in the paper, about the great wheat king, Herman Trelle, of Wembley. Upon arrival, we stayed at the Donald Hotel in Grande Prairie. However, we found it too expensive and moved into the immigration hall, where I met Mrs. Stern who, later, became my neighbour for many years. Frank Donald drove the settlers around to show them the available homesteads. Hans chose the homestead S.W. 9-73-3-W6th located in the Fitzsimmons area.

The Ludy brothers, Frank and Hans, helped my husband build a large barn which we used as our temporary shelter. Our fifth child, Alberta (Mrs. Neil Patterson, of Bezanson), was born.

One evening, when we were eating supper, a huge grass fire, from the Kleskun Lake, came upon us so suddenly that we only had time to save two feather ticks and Hans, miraculously, managed to save his tin of tobacco, but missed his gold watch which was lying near by.

We found the loss of all our belongings a great misfortune. Our children spent hours playing puzzle, by trying to piece my china back together. My father-in-law sent us a thousand dollars, in aide, which was greatly appreciated.

We lived with our neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Glen Secrest, while the Ludy brothers again helped Hans build a small log shanty, which we lived in for many years.

On this homestead, Hans broke approximately 40 acres; clearing the land by hand and breaking it with horses. The frost caught our first attempt at raising grain, so we decided to raise a few swine.

Hans spent most of his time, in the winter, hunting and trapping at the Wapiti river. A tragedy nearly struck Hans, on one of these winter excursions, when he stuck his loaded gun into the snow and it accidentally discharged, shooting him through the arm. Luckily the Lody brothers were with him and were able to take him to the Grande Prairie hospital. Due to the long, cold journey, Hans arrived in a weakened condition and his arm nearly had to be amputated because of an improperly applied tourniquet. However, with the skilful care of Dr. O'Brien, he recovered after several weeks.

Our homesteading days continued, and we were finally blessed with our only son, Hans Jr., in 1930. I recall having to dress Hans in one of the girl's dresses, while I washed and dried his only boy's attire.

Hans finally spent one winter getting out some logs, in the Bad Heart area, in hopes of building a new barn. He took Eva, his oldest daughter, along as cook and helper. One evening when they returned to camp, they found the cook shack aflame. So, having no place to stay, they had to make a long, cold journey home. Eva vividly recalls having to walk many miles behind the sleigh, to keep from freezing to death. Eventually, Hans did get the logs home and built the barn. That same winter, Charlotte went out to milk the cow and had to use a kitchen lamp for light. The lamp was set too close to the straw roof, and once again, we lost our barn and livestock. Hans suffered severe burns, to his hands and arms, while trying to extinguish the blaze.

In our homesteading days, our menu consisted mostly of wild meat, vegetables and dried berries. In the spring, the new dandelions and pigweed made delicious greens. Occasionally, even duck eggs were used for baking or an omelette.

In 1932, Margaret (Mrs. John Courtney, of Calgary) was born. Margaret suffered a severe skin condition as a result of my eating too much salt pork as, in those times, I had to nurse my babies. Finally, Mrs. Turner told me to make a tea, out of chick weed, which cleared her skin.

Several summers later, another tragedy struck us when Charlotte contracted typhoid fever through contaminated slough water; nearly losing her life. Hans, Lenora, and Olive also came down with the fever. Alberta remembers being terrified, when they were lined up outside of the house to be immunized. She asked Eva "What are they going to do to us?" Eva's reply was "Shoot us."

In one of my frustrated moments, I grabbed the twenty-two rifle to shoot a mouse in the cupboard; missing the mouse I shattered my dishes.

Our last child Evelyn (Mrs. Ray McMillan of Grande Prairie) was born in 1935.

After my family had grown up, I began trapping and saving the money to buy a herd of cattle.

We gave up homesteading, in 1946, and purchased a ½ section of better farming land in the East Kleskun area. We remained farming there until we retired, in 1973, to the hamlet of Bezanson.

I lost my dear Hans on November 26, 1975. He is buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery. Living alone now, I remember many happy days. However, I'm blessed with all my children, and many grandchildren around me.

Hans Jr. married Carol Canning and is now living in Grande Prairie.

HARRY LEE SHINN

Harry Shinn was born in Illinois, U.S.A. in 1888, coming to Canada just after the First World War, and settling in Southern Alberta in the Manyberries District. He farmed there a few years, then moved up to the Peace Country and homesteaded on S.E. 27-73-3-W6, in the Fitzsimmons District in 1927.

Harry built a little log house and barn. The log house was the scene of many a poker party, some good and some not so good. Harry never got mad if he lost when he was playing for money, but if it was just a friendly game to pass the time, and if he lost he was furious, and many a pack of cards went in the stove.

Harry always farmed with horses, and how he loved his horses. They were real pets, but he didn't feel the same about the neighbors' horses when they came around and rubbed on the gate till it came open. He rigged up his shot gun at the gate so if they rubbed on it, the gun would go off, the gate came open and the horses came in. The air was blue for awhile.

He was fond of children, always giving them candy or whatever he had on hand.

He sold his place in 1953, and moved his house to Bezanson. He really enjoyed "shelling out" to the kids at Hallowe'en. He always had lots of goodies for them and enjoyed it as much as the kids did.

In 1964, Harry was in the hospital, but suffered from another stroke of which he never recovered. He remained in the hospital until the spring of 1966 where he passed away at the age of 77.

THOMAS SORENSON

In August, 1924, Canada received a gift from Denmark, of a number of mostly young people, among them Fred Sorenson, his wife and three grown-up children, Vern, Ejner, and Margaret. I came in November of the same year. We had been farming successfully in Denmark for a number of years, all Dad's life, but then Dad fell for the idea that Canada was as good as it was advertised to be. We stayed in Redvers, Saskatchewan, until April, 1925, when we then moved to Ochre River, Manitoba. Vern and I got jobs on farms at Eden, which name was appropriate for a small area.

In the winter of 1925-26, we cut cordwood on the Riding Mountains, but the money we made didn't give us any problems. In the spring of 1926, we moved to Dauphin and worked on farms for the summer. It was there I developed my first stomach ulcer. Apparently the transplant to another country was too much for me. I never regained health and strength fully. Next winter, we cut cordwood again and became efficient enough to gain the respect of others.

In the spring of 1927, Alberta looked good to us, and we moved to Camrose. In the fall of 1927, Dad and I came to Grande Prairie to check into this lovely homestead deal. Vern and Ejner came later, and we homesteaded on some of that submarginal land between Teepee Creek and Bezanson, which later became known as the Fitzsimmons District. Margaret and our stepmother didn't go with us, when we left Dauphin.



Tom Sorensen family.

If we had known what was involved, I doubt if we would have stayed with it except, what else could we do. As it was, we put all our efforts into building up those homesteads, and there is now a viable farm unit, if well managed. (Vern sold his unit.)

The memories most vivid in my mind from those years are those of cold weather, sickness, privation, work, frustration, and more cold. But there were compensations not measured in dollar value.

In June, 1932, Margaret, who had arrived, married Sigvard Braun of Smokey Heights, also a homesteader. In December of the same year, Vern married Flossie Graham. In November, 1933, I married Ruth Thomas, and so family life started, which is a lot better than batching in my opinion. Ejner got married several years later and made his home in Prince George, B.C., but prior to that he had been quite a help to me during my prolonged illness.

The first thing on the homestead was to build a small, one-room log shack, then a log barn. Later we built a little better shack, and later still we moved into a 14' x 16' granary, still batching. When I got married in '33, we built a 12' x 16' room to the granary. In 1945, we built a kitchen and two small bedrooms, and this complex is still lived in in 1977. Vern built a presentable house on his quarter when he got married.

The main task of course, was to cut brush and break land, all the while getting lots of attention from the friendly mosquitoes. Ruth and I were in charge of Fitzsimmons Post Office located on the C. Milner farm from 1940 to 1945, and that involved some hard trips for Ruth because I was not able.

Neighborliness was a big factor in making those years bearable. Help was always forthcoming, and I needed help frequently. Now when I look back, I marvel how the children endured going to school on horseback over 2½ miles, in 50 degree below zero sometimes, but they did it.

We had three children, Fred, Albert, and Mary. They had a supervisor most of the time. One time we got a teacher, Mrs. Margaret White (nee Vinet), but the Superintendent told me they couldn't afford to employ their best teacher in a school with about six children, so it didn't last.



Road conditions in Fitzsimmons.

I can't recall any dramatic events except perhaps the year Ejner had a beautiful crop of wheat and enough acres that it would have paid for a new tractor, but it froze and didn't even pay for the harvesting, so, no tractor.

This narrative would not be complete or honest without mentioning that in 1939, we got involved in a wonderful Christian fellowship, which enabled us more than anything else to endure the hardships of pioneering. It helped us to look at life in perspective.

In the line of family history, Dad returned to Denmark in 1932. Vern and Flossie sold their farm in 1968 and moved to Langley, B.C. Ejner passed away at Prince George in 1973 from a lung ailment. Of our three children, Fred is a taxi driver in Edmonton. Mary works in an office in Edmonton after spending 12 years in the ministry. Ill health compelled her to leave that work. Albert has taken over the family farm and operates it quite successfully. He married Gerti Shinn from Bowsman, Manitoba in 1968, and to put it mildly, they have four lively boys, Allan, David, Sheldon and Murray.

Ruth and I are retired and live in Grande Prairie. Our main interest being that same Christian fellowship, but old neighbors are always welcome to drop in.

I believe you could write a book about the lives of most pioneer families, many of them tragic. I hope these thoughts will be of interest to some.

ALBERT SORENSEN

I was born one cold December day under the watchful eye of Johanna Haakstad. I spent my early childhood days on my parents' farm in the Fitzsimmons District, where chickens and I found that the farm was never big enough for both of us. I took my schooling at Fitzsimmons and Tranquility schools. I rode a horse and at school did janitor work for $6 per month. This work consisted of hauling drinking water from Fred Vinet's, lighting fires in the winter and cleaning floors and boards all year.



Fred and Albert Sorensen.

Our means of travel was the old democrat wagon in the summer and a front box of a sleigh with a caboose on top in winter. A small stone inside kept us reasonably warm.

Our neighbors to the east were Edmund Gaboury, Harry Shinn to the west and for awhile G. Simpkins to the south.

In our spare time we'd swim in the dugouts until the "itch" developed and winter time saw us skiing down the slopes of Mt. Ole to our east.

As I became older, I did more and more of the farming and saw the change over from horses to tractors, which came to our farm in 1948.

Harvesting was done by the binder and threshing machine. Horses were used to haul in the bundles from the fields and the straw piles resulting were used for cattle feed. Then came the swather, combine and grain trucks.

We had a community telephone from 1946 to June, 1967, when the underground phones were put in.

Fall was spent in getting the winter wood out. Jeff Dillabough and I usually had a hunting trip together. We'd go down the banks of the Smoky River and tramp the bottom of the Kleskun Creek.

In 1958 power came to the farm on the "use now, pay later" plan, and in 1959 we had a well dug. Water came at 402 feet. These two conveniences added to easing the work load.

In 1967 I fell under cupids arrow and in 1968 married Gerty Shinn of Bowsman, Manitoba. We have resided on the farm ever since. We have four sons; Allan, David, Sheldon and Murray. In 1972 we purchased the farm and have finished clearing the land.

We live in the original house, built in 1930, with a few modern conveniences added.

The old log barn, built in 1933-34, is still in use. Logs for this came from Jack Fitzpatrick's sawmill and the shingles were handmade by Dan Rheames and his shingle mill.

JOHANNAS VERNER SORENSEN

Vern Sorensen came to the Peace River country in 1928, along with his father and brothers and homesteaded on the S.E. 28-73-3-W6, which was all

bush at the time. He got a few acres brushed and broke, built a house and in December, 1932, he married Flossie Graham. Vern worked at Jack Fitzpatrick's sawmill off and on for several years until he got more land under cultivation. He then bought the Ab Graham Place, the S.½ 26-73-3-W6, and also the Carl Girlich Place, the N.E. 23-73-3-W6. In the mid thirties, they built a big barn and had a dance in the loft.

In 1937, they adopted Donald at the age of six months. He helped on the farm as he grew up. Later Donald bought the Charlie Milner Place, the N.W.¼ 23-73-3-W6. Between Donald and Vern, they farmed all these places as one farm unit.

Donald also ran the road grader for a few years, then left and went to Vancouver where he worked as a disel mechanic.

In 1968, Donald and Vern sold their farm to John Wohlgemuth of Manitoba, and retired to the west coast. Donald has since married and has a son.

THE SPIDEN FAMILY

Alex Spiden, his wife Mary (nee Coney) and their daughter May, sailed from Grantshouse, Scotland, on the last emigration ship coming to Canada, the S.S. Montrose. The beautiful Canadian posters showing beautiful waving fields of grain had enticed yet another family to leave "Bonnie Scotland" (and its comfortable way of life) for the unknown ways of a new land. Actually, Mary's family, the Jim Coneys, had come out the year before and settled in what became the Fitzsimmons district. Mary's mother had passed away in May, 1929, and Mary felt that they should come to join the rest of the family.

The boat trip from Scotland was an enjoyable experience for Alex and he often recalled the thrill of sitting in the prow of the ship as it sailed down the St. Lawrence River.

Mary felt that the trip on the boat train from Montreal to Winnipeg was something to be "experienced". The train stopped every so often to let all the passengers off "for a break". There would be firewood there and everyone had their own tea kettle. They would light a fire and make their tea, so "bread and tea" was their chief diet from Montreal to Winnipeg. Mary remembers all too well the train from Winnipeg to Edmonton and on to Grande Prairie. At Rycroft all the passengers, except those waiting to go to Spirit River, got off while the train went to Spirit River and backed up again to Rycroft. Mary's only thought as the train disappeared around the bend was one of panic, "Here I am, lost in a strange land".

But the train returned, the Spidens got on, and arrived in Grande Prairie on August 13, 1929. They obtained the quarter of S.E. 12-73-3-W6, just north of Coneys and while Charlie Brewer was building their house, they lived with the Coneys until November.

Alex set about clearing land by hand and breaking with horses, as all around him were doing. Unfortunately, he had come in August of 1929, so had no crop that year. His first crop was in 1930 and it was a good one, but after 1929 there was no price for grain. This continued all through the thirties, so farming wasn't a profitable venture. Alex had worked on the railroad in Scotland and loved trains. He often told his children of the sound of the Flying Scotsman as it roared from Edinburgh to London. Often, when he was asked if he didn't regret his decision to immigrate to Canada, he never hesitated to say that he was not sorry that he had come. He loved working with horses and treated them as pets, rather than mere beasts of burden.



Alex Spiden.



Mr. Alex Spiden, wife Mary. Back Row — Judy, Sandy, Gail, Heather, Sheila, George, May.

The 1930's saw many changes in the district. The Fitzsimmons School was built and May started in Grade 1 the second year it was open. The family grew; George, Sheila, Heather and Gail were born in the thirties, Alex Jr. (Sandy) was born in 1940, and Judy in 1946. The children remember the Christmas concerts at Fitzsimmons School and often wondered why Santa Claus always had a Scottish accent just like Dad's (Alex was a favorite Santa for many years.)

World War II began in 1939 and Alex joined the Army in April of 1942, first as a member of the Medical Corps, later transferring to the Veteran's Guard. In October, 1942, Mary moved with the children to Grande Prairie. After Alex returned from Army service in 1946, they moved the farm home to Grande

Prairie and Alex spent many hours remodelling and making a very comfortable home for the family.

Alex passed away on March 27, 1973; Mary resides in Grande Prairie. Members of the family are:

May (Mrs. Wilfred Johnson), Sexsmith, (Danny, David, Annamae, Carlene) George, Grande Prairie. Sheila (Mrs. Walter Kruk), Edmonton, (Norman, Randy, Dale, Brenda, Kelly), Heather, Grande Prairie. Gail (Mrs. Roy Loren), Star, Alberta, (Troy, Todd, Trevor). Sandy, Whitecourt (Cindy, Robin), (Sandy married Marilynn Kezema). Judy (Mrs. Wayne Carter), North Battleford, Saskatchewan (Billie-Jo).

ED STEARN

Ed Stearn brought his family to the Peace River country in March of 1927. There was his wife Charlotte, his two sons, Ed Jr. and Cliff from a previous marriage. His wife also had four daughters from a previous marriage and they were Roberta, June, Cherry and Joyce. The next year they had a daughter, Elsie.

They rented land from C. W. Fields and lived there for two years. During that time he filed on a homestead in the Fitzsimmons District. They cleared land by hand and built a log house and other buildings, then moved in during the fall of 1929. The children had 3½ miles to walk to school (Lindsay).



Ed Stearn.

All farming was done with horses. They had some cattle, pigs, poultry and a big garden. They canned vegetables for the winter. All meat had to be canned or cured and wild berries picked for fruit or jam.

While clearing and breaking land on the homestead, they would take a box of food for the day and cook it out in the open on a fire wherever they worked. The potatoes and vegetables were left whole with the skins on and put in a bed of hot coals. They were delicious.

In 1945, they bought Wesley Brewer's land and moved there. By this time their family was all grown up and gone. They farmed there until 1954. Ed passed away on December 28, 1954. Charlotte then moved, her daughter Elsie and husband, Bill Adams, took over the farm for two years, then sold it and moved to Edmonton. Charlotte bought property in Clairmont where she now lives. Her oldest daughter Roberta married Ed Coney. She passed away in January, 1966. Charlotte's second daughter June married Wladymier Kochalyk and live at Bezanson. The rest of the family is scattered about in other parts of the country.

THE GEORGE STRUHAN STORY — by daughter Mary

Yorko Struhan was born in 1876, in Austria, one of six children. He had 3 brothers: Elko, Onoofree, and Wasyl and two sisters: Mary and Dotska.

He went to school and worked all he could after school for spending money. In 1897, at the age of 21, he



George Struhan.



Mr. and Mrs. George Struhan.

was called to the Austrian Army. After three years he came home to be a carpenter and bricklayer.

In 1900 he met and married my mother, Wasylina Nickiforuk. They lived in a little house in his father and mother's yard.

In a short while exciting news of that great and wonderful land of Canada was reaching the ears of their people. "A free country with lots of land." Dad and his Dad didn't take too long before they decided to come to Canada. There were six in the group; his Mother and Father, sister Dotska, brother Wasyl and my Mom and Dad. They sold what they had (for travelling expenses) and set out for Canada. They were on the boat for fourteen days. From Halifax they took the train to Rosthern. People from their town back home had already taken up homesteads near there, so they met them with oxen and drove them home to their place. Immediately my Aunt Dotska found a job housekeeping and babysitting for a farmer. In the meantime my Dad located a suitable homestead in Cudworth with a lot of big sloughs and a few poplars. He built a cabin in the poplars and that became their home for a few years. His brother took a homestead next to his and they helped each other. The cabin roofs' were made of popular rails with hay and prairie sod. Money was scarce but he managed to buy a shotgun to keep them well supplied with prairie chickens and ducks. A short while later Dad hired on with a rancher and mother dug seneca roots at home during the summer. This bought them a cow and their winter groceries.



First home of Mr. and Mrs. Geo Struhan.

By now Dad had acquired some oxen and a plow, and Mother always had a big garden. He became very discouraged after a few years of frozen wheat crops. So, without any regrets, they both decided to venture to greener pastures. It wasn't long before North Dakota was to be their new home. Dad left mother and me behind while he went to the States to file on a homestead. After being fairly satisfied with the choice he made in North Dakota, he came back for us. It was a long train ride from Rosthern to Bellfield, North Dakota. The buildings were made of mud rolled into



New house on Struhan homestead.

logs and woven in between the few rails they had. This made a very hard wall. There were only enough trees on the farm for the roofs. All the neighbors helped and the house went up very rapidly. Dad farmed for a few years but the hot burning winds and the heat from the sun burned most of the crops. At harvest time the gale winds would shell the wheat onto the ground. The gardens were good; cucumbers, corn, watermelons, pumpkins and many other vegetables. Wild plums grew abundantly. There were a few fruit orchards near Bellfield. Our sunflower patch yielded enough oil for all our winter supply. Our neighbor had a press to squeeze out the oil. The warm rains would encourage the mushrooms to pop up and we used to collect them. Some were as big as saucers. Prairie chickens were plentiful. Dad bought a pig butcher for five dollars and we had our own cured pork.

Being a carpenter, my Dad built a house for a neighbor and got a team of horses and a walking plow for payment. He raised a few good crops of flax, and it was certainly beautiful to see in bloom when the wind was blowing — just like a sea of water. The flax was moved, dried and hauled at night when the dew was on, as it would shell out in the hot sun. All his grain was stacked as threshing machines were far away. The steam powered outfits came in winter to thresh.

When Dad hauled grain to town he had to improvise hand brakes for the back wheels of the wagon. He used four horses to haul 60 bushels of grain. His grain was always sacked just in case a load had to be unloaded along the way, because of not enough pulling power. In the winter a chain around the back runner of the sleigh would be a brake for going down the hills.

The nearest store and post office was called Gorham — five miles away. We hauled water from a creek, later from a dugout, then from a well.

Mike Badnicks were our neighbors, about six miles away, and they read in the paper that the Peace River

Country was the best country in Canada — oat crops 100 bushel to the acre, wheat crop 60 bushel to the acre. A few farmers got together, bought rifles, and ammunition and set out for the big open country east of Kleskun Hill. When they got to Peace River that was the end of the railroad in 1915. They had to come up the Smoky River by motor boat to the old Bezanson town site. Dad really like this country, so he filed on a homestead S.E. 24-72-4 W6th. He didn't know that it was sticky gumbo. However, he came back and said he found a lovely place to live; 16 miles from town, no high winds or steep hills to haul grain over. In 1916 Dad sold his farm to a neighbor and we loaded all the machinery, four horses, furniture, dog and chickens into a box car, and Dad stayed in there with them all the way to Canada. Mother and I, Mr. and Mrs. Mike Babnick and four children: Annie, John, Nick and Wasil, Mrs. Matachuck and 2 children, Annie and Jimmy came ahead by train. That was in May 1916, it was a rough ride. We got to Grande Prairie a few days ahead of the box cars and had to wait in Grande Prairie for them. When the freight train finally arrived, we reloaded our wagon, and started out for our land east of Grande Prairie. It rained all day long and we stopped at Kleskun Hill to feed the horses. Dad put up a tent, got out our mattress, and we stayed the night, as Dad knew his directions better by daylight. When we got to the farm we lived in a tent until a house was built. We dug a well, built a barn, small chicken house, made a small fence for a cow he bought from Frank Turner and cut some hay. Dad had a young man, John Ostafichuck, who came with us on the train, help us get settled. Dad found out his sulky plough didn't work on that heavy soil so he tied some rocks behind the end of the plough so that way he got some ploughing done.

Dad was a blacksmith and some people would bring their plough shares to him to be sharpened. After our well was dug, Mr. and Mrs. Tempest hauled water from it.

We needed lumber from Bad Heart Sawmill, so Paul Podulsky helped with his big Percheron Greys. Dad drove a balky horse that we had.

By this time we heard of a school at Kleskun Hill, five miles from our farm. It bothered me very much that I had to stay home and I cried a lot, so my Dad took me up there the first day. Well, I liked school but I couldn't speak a word of English. I went for one month to Miss Bennet. On the first of March, 1917 Tom Whalen was hauling us children to school. There were two Calliou girls, one Matichuck girl, two Babnick children, Irene Whalen and myself, Mary Struhan. I had to walk three quarters of a mile to catch a ride from Matichuck's place with the "school van". This was just an open sleigh in the winter and a two seated democrat in the summer. It was one of these morning trips that we met Ashley Thompson and his dad in a buggy with driving horses. They were looking at some land Ashley's had just acquired. We were sure cold when we got there the first morning. The fire was just started in the big wood stove in the corner. We had to stand up on chairs to reach the top to warm up our hands. The teacher's name was Mrs. Killon. That fall of 1917 the first war broke out and the flu was making its rounds. The school was closed on that account but I took my reader home and sounded words all winter.



Thatched roof chicken house on Struhan homestead. Laurie Thompson and Tony Padulsky.

On the first of March we went to school again, but this time in the William Calliou house, just north of the Bulford slough. They had one empty room for us to use. I had quite a few miles to walk but I didn't mind, as I liked my teacher, Miss Dorothy Morrison. It was her first school and she taught us everything. Besides school work, we learned to knit, crochet, sew and even bake a cake. She brought seeds from Grande Prairie and got us to plant little vegetable and flower gardens. She gave us careful instructions and told us that she would give a prize for the best garden in the fall. Just before fair time she rode her horse, Molly and inspected all the gardens. I was sure pleased on Monday to hear that I got the prize — one dollar. There were many entries in the fair; vegetables, flowers, sewing and baking. I entered them all, even a loaf of bread and a sheaf of grain.

That summer our new school, Est Kleskun was built and I had only one mile to go to school.



George Struhan "Anoo — Giddup", "Charlie and Jack".

Miss Morrison had us practicing for the Christmas concert early in December. We did not have a piano that year, but we did have nice long concert. We had a nice big tree with candles and other decorations on it. The teacher bought all the gifts and there was plenty of nuts and candy. I remember I got a book for a gift and was I pleased! That was the first time I saw a Santa Claus.

In the summer for games we would play soft ball and pump-pump-pull-away, also "Auntie I over" the school.

The school got a piano one year later and then we had a lot of nice get togethers. There were dances and card parties and people came from far and near. Alzina Fitzpatrick played the piano, Jack Fitzpatrick, Bill Fitzpatrick, and Ernie Ford played the violin.

Miss Morrison taught for three years and then got married. Then we got a teacher from Scotland, Mrs. Jim Storm.

Some of the school children left school and went to work, some helped at home and others moved away. I married Paul Podulsky. Babnicks moved to Washington, and Matychucks moved to Oregon and my mother and Dad moved to Oregon.

In 1930 my Dad and Mother came back from Oregon and homesteaded in the Fitzsimmons district. Dad bought an Allis Chalmers tractor and broke land for himself and some for us. He built a log house, barn and chicken house. The barn and chicken house had thatched roofs — made from slough hay bundles.

He got two big steers from us and trained them to harness. They were used as a team to haul hay, wood and many other jobs. He even used them for driving. He cleared ten acres of bush by hand and broke it up with his tractor. He grew wheat. Mother had a big garden and sold eggs.

In 1949 they moved to our place to live with us because of my mother's health. My mother passed away in March 1950 and Dad passed away in September 1962.

ALFRED AND TRESSIE VINET — by Margaret White

Our parents Alfred (Fred) and Tressie Vittetoe Vinet moved to the Peace River country in April, 1928 from Rosemary, Alberta with their five children; Frank, Margaret, George, Alberta and Jeanette.

Dad originally came from St. Pierre, Manitoba in about 1911 to settle in the dry lands south of the Red Deer River at Hutton, Alberta. Mother moved with her family from Moscow, Idaho, U.S.A. in 1917 to Hutton and here they were married on January 2, 1918. All the children were born here before they moved to Rosemary.

Dad left Hutton because the crops were dried out year after year, but he did not find farming C.P.R. irrigated land at Rosemary to his liking either. The opportunity to own his own land by homesteading in the Peace River country sounded good to him, so he made a trip to Grande Prairie in February, 1928. He did not file on land immediately but rented the Bill Storm farm in the East Kleskun District, where we lived for two years before moving to the homestead. Although we children enjoyed the long slow trip from Rosemary



Vinet Family — Alberta, Frank, Mrs. Vinet, Margaret, George, Jeannette, Mr. Vinet.

to Grande Prairie by N.A.R. coach, I know that Mother did not with five young ones to care for. Dad rode in the freight cars to keep an eye on the horses, the cow, our dog, the machinery and the household goods.

In 1929 Dad filed on the S.E. of 15-73-3-W6 in which was later to become part of the Fitzsimmons School District. Since this was relatively close to the Storm farm, he began his work on the homestead from there. There was one road in, a wagon trail angling in from the southwest through sloughs and over stumps, past the homes of Glenn Secrest, Norman Greenwood, Hans Ruch and Jim Pallant. To the south on what was later to become the main road to Bezanson and to Highway 34 was a cutline which had been blazed through thick stands of poplar trees.

Our first house was built of logs taken from the Bad Heart area. When he was hauling the logs, Dad used



Vinet homestead house.



Vinet homestead, 1957.

Bruno Braumberger's barn and was always welcome to stay. It is hard to remember who all helped in the building, but Albert Gray was the carpenter and I know that Jack Lupton hewed the logs on three sides. Jim Pallant and Bruno helped raise them. We had fun in that big house even though it was cold in winter. Before the ceiling was in, Mother let us put up a swing. Alberta was flying high one day and fell off into a pan of eggs. The attic was quite large and so provided an excellent hide-away when one had a good book. It was here also that the first Basket Social was held to help raise money for the new school. Even though Dad and Mother built a two storey squared log house in 1943 which was much more comfortable, the old one has never lost its appeal.

There was plenty of work for everyone although Dad never seemed to become discouraged. I am sure that we children did not realize it at the time, but Mother, too, was fully occupied with milking cows, gardening, canning, quilting, sewing, cooking and doing anything else that needed doing. There was quite a standard rule in our household, "Go to bed early and get up early."

I can remember watching Dad dig a dam with two horses, a plow and a kind of scoop for cleaning it out. Water was always a problem until we finally got a drilled well in 1949. In the early days many a mosquito wiggler lost its life in the wash water.

Our first acres were brushed by Jim Pallant and Bruno Braumberger. Dad exchanged work with Jim, but Bruno told me that he received $7 an acre for brushing, piling and burning. I do not know what Wes Brewer got for breaking with his 1530 McCormick Deering tractor and plow. The root picking I remember distinctly. A good day for this was usually hot with swarms of mosquitoes about. I remember one time where we were working the field was hilly so Frank, George and I would take the chance to sit down when Dad went out of sight with his root harrow. When we saw the horses' ears appear over the top of the hill on the return trip, we would be at work again. I am sure that we were not fooling Dad. Later he bought the Robideau, Morehouse and Gallagher homesteads.

Our potato crop was always abundant. Dad grew at least a wagon box full every year just to make certain that we would have enough. Needless to say, the pigs and chickens enjoyed boiled potatoes all winter.

Early in the summer when Dad began to sharpen the knife for the mower, we knew it was time to hay. During the early 30's, he cut the slough grass near home although later he hayed on the Kleskun Lake. I think that it was in 1932 or '33 that the bees and hornets were so plentiful. Anyway it was fortunate that none of us were allergic to their stings because we got one with nearly every load of hay. We had a contest going, and if I remember correctly, George won out with twenty bites for the haying season. Jeannette was younger and so missed out on some of this fun. After the mid thirties we had some straw piles to use as feed



Bath time.

also. One time a stack caved in and the cows lying around were completely covered. It was winter and Dad was away working, so we all helped dig the animals out.

Later when he hayed on the Kleskun Lake, Dad had some very hard trips. It was sometimes so cold that the snow crunched under the sleigh runners and both he and the horses would be covered with frost. It was at times like this that the heat from the air tight heater felt good.

During the early 30's we took our wheat to Warren's Flour Mill in Sexsmith for grinding. Once as Dad was returning home across Kleskun Lake a blizzard blew in, the horses got off the trail and the sleigh box tipped over. Even though it was dark, he dug around in the snow until he found all the sacks. He then let the horses find their own way, arriving home in the early morning half frozen.

Dad bought a 1931 Ford Model A, but he never got on so well with a car. He was used to horses who were trained where to go. One time after there was some pavement near Grande Prairie, he was stopped by the R.C.M.P. who told him that his front wheels were shimmying. He had a reply. "Don't worry about her. She'll be alright when we get back to the stumps." He went ont to town.

Despite some hardships and isolation, life was not all work and mosquito bites. After we got our first radio in 1938, an R.C.A. Victor, everyone kept up to date on the latest N.H.L. scores and the doings of Ma Perkins and the Happy Gang. Neighbors would drop in for a visit or for a haircut as Dad did some local barbering. During the winter a card game might last all night so the visitors could go home in the daylight. I am sure there must still be a depression in the yard where the horseshoe pegs were for so many years. We all liked to play softball and eat homemade ice-cream on a Sunday afternoon. For many years on May 24th, Dad would hitch the team to the wagon and take us to a spot called "the Pinnacle" for a picnic. That was fun and scary because we always expected to see a bear.

Dad passed away in January, 1962 at home. Mother sold the farm the next year to Lud and Bertha Wilson. After spending much of the next few years with Jeannette, she moved into the Montrose Apartments in Grande Prairie. She lived there until Heritage Lodge opened in February of 1976. However, ill health forced her to move to Swan Haven Nursing Home where she is at the present.

None of the family live in the Fitzsimmons District now. George, who had lived in Edmonton for a number of years, passed away in November, 1976, leaving a married son, Allan. He served mainly in Italy during World War Two with the First Division of the Army Service Corps.

Frank, who was with the R.C.A.F. in Canada during the war, lives in St. Pierre, Manitoba. He married Jeanne Joubert, and they have one daughter, Pat, and four sons, Gilbert, Raymond, Ronald who is married and Paul.

Alberta, now of High Level, married Peter Kebalo. They have a daughter, Karren, and a son, Bobby, both residing in Vancouver.

Jeannette, now of Quesnel, B.C., is married to Francis Macalister with two sons, Stuart and Jamie.

I married Bob White of Teepee Creek and we have two children. Ken, also of Teepee Creek, is married to Donna Sipe. Their two children are Robbie and Trudy, aged four and two respectively. Lorraine, our daughter, lives in Fort McMurray with her husband, Marvin Keyser and they have a two year old son, Darrin.

LUD AND BERTHA WILSON

Ludwick Wilson and I (Bertha M. Waddell) met in Regina, Saskatchewan in January, 1943 while Lud was in the Army. We were married in Regina on April 29th, 1946, after Lud came home from overseas. We first lived in Bracken, Saskatchewan where Lud and his older brother, Frank, ran a garage which they bought when they returned from the war.

Our son, Terry Ludwick arrived on February 25, 1947. Garry Grant entered the picture March 23, 1948 and Kenneth Michael came along September 29, 1949.

In 1949 we rented Dad Wilson's farm and had a complete crop failure, not even feed for the cattle. We then managed to buy some land and after being hailed out seven years in a row, started looking around.

We made a trip to the Peace River country with



Mr. Vinet and grandchildren, Lorraine White, Bobby Kebalo, Allen Vinet.



Mr. and Mrs. Lud Wilson, sons Ken, Gary, Terry.

Don and Anne Bleau in June, 1961. The Bleaus moved to Grande Prairie in June, 1961. Lud came back in January, 1962 and bought the Floyd Hillerud half section near the Kleskun Hills.

On April 22, 1962 we bid farewell to Bracken. Lud with Garry and Ken as co-pilots drove our semi-truck. Terry and Rusty (our ginger cat) rode with me in the pick-up. We made Calgary the first day, Valleyview the second and arrived at Shirley and Henry Fords the next day for an early coffee break. Then we pressed on to unload our worldly goods. Our neighbours were marvellous. I remember that day we had two lunches and supper prepared for us, not to mention numerous visits and helping hands during the summer. Indeed we are still experiencing much neighborliness.

We had brought our cattle with us from Saskatchewan so we looked for more land with water. In January, 1963 we moved to the Fred Vinet place across the road from the Fitzsimmons School site. Frank Kohalyk helped us move and stayed with us a few years. We got power in October, 1963.

When we moved to Fitzsimmons the boys were aged 15, 14, and 12. They attended the Bezanson and Grande Prairie schools.

The fall of 1966 Terry went to Edmonton, where he took up the sheet metal trade and also met Miss Inge Florian. Inge and Terry were married October 12, 1968. They have two sons, Cary Lee born May 25, 1970 and Kelly Alan on April 10, 1971. When Garry went to work he drove a truck and heavy equipment. He has his own truck now. Garry married Miss Dianne Kimble, April 11, 1969. Their daughter, Rhonda Lee was born July 30, 1973 and son Wyatt Grant arrived December 16, 1975. Ken has worked mostly for Park Brothers since he left school and has his own tree farmer. He married Miss Joan Lux on April 17, 1971. Their daughter, Tracey Dawn arrived December 17, 1975.

In the spring we sold our farm to the Peel Brothers. Lud and I reside in Grande Prairie, where Lud sells real estate for Cross Country Realty.



Fitzsimmons School.



Fitzsimmons School Barn.



Parade at first school picnic. Back Row — Frank Vinet, Betty Love, Cora Morehouse, Betty Coney, Thelma Morehouse, Amy Morehouse. Middle — May Rice, Margaret Vinet, John Coney, Jeannette Vinet. Front Row — George Vinet, Edith Morehouse, Elsie Stearn, Arthur McKinnon, Stephen McNally.

Schools

FITZSIMMONS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4500

Information for the following story on the Fitzsimmons School District No. 4550 was obtained from the minutes of the Board Meetings, from correspondence found in the office of the County of Grande Prairie and from the memories of people who lived there.

Every effort has been made to present factual information as correctly as possible. The school registers for the years 1931 to 1937 inclusive could not be found, so it was difficult to prepare an accurate list of the students for those years. An apology is hereby made for names inadvertently omitted or for other errors.

During the years between 1927 and 1930, so many families moved into the area north of the Lindsay District that there was need for a school. In fact when the school was opened in September, 1931 the enrolment numbered about thirty students.

The Fitzsimmons School was named after Scotty Fitzsimmons who had homesteaded in the district. It was thought at the time that the school was situated on his land, but this was not the case. He had filed on the quarter adjoining and never did build a house there. For the short time that he lived in the area, he stayed with the Jim Coney family. Other names submitted for the school were "Beaver" and "Sunnycrest".

The pioneers of the Fitzsimmons School District

worked hard and under great financial difficulty to erect a school and to secure the best education they could for their children. At almost every Board meeting during the 30's, the first item of discussion was the financial standing of the district. As it was, there were some children who missed a year's schooling because there was no building. When it did open, many children had long distances to walk to school. However, March 22, 1930 everything was in order to organize and on June 24th, the proposed Fitzsimmons School District received a letter from the government building inspector which stated, "The cost of the building complete with equipment should be well under $1000, if the board purchases the materials and gives a contract for labor."

The first meeting that we have a record of was held on July 9, 1930 with Mr. Ed Stearn being appointed as chairman and Mr. Abe Graham and Mr. Alfred Vinet as trustees. Mrs. Ed Stearn became the Secretary-Treasurer at the rate of $50 per year.

It is interesting to note that at the October 9th meeting, some important decisions were made. The building was to be of lumber and there was to be V-joint wainscoting four feet high and plaster board used instead of shiplap for the interior, No. 1 shingles instead of No. 2, and there was to be a brick chimney on brackets instead of pipe. Also they planned two outbuildings and a barn.

Money was needed so the Secretary was instructed to apply for debentures in the sum of $1700 at eight per cent per annum. On December 15, 1930, this By-Law No. 1 was rescinded and another application made to issue debentures for $1500. In the meantime the Board decided to apply to the Department for a loan of $200 and if this were granted, the debentures would be withdrawn. This later proved to be the case. On April 17th the Minister approved both the loan and a grant of $200 "only upon receipt of assurance that the people had put forth their utmost effort and that there were no other debts."

The decision was also made at this meeting to buy lumber from the Jack Fitzpatrick Saw Mill for the school building and to buy other equipment from Moyers in Edmonton. Homemade desks constructed by Mr. Charlie Brewer and Mr. Dexter Wagner were in style. The children were quite happy that each desk sat two students and sometimes three if the attendance was high.

On August 1, 1931, the time had come to advertise for a teacher at $850 per year and for a janitor by sealed tender. The school was to be insured for $2000 and text books bought for the first six grades.

Mrs. Dorothy Cowell became the first teacher. Among those students attending that first year were: John and Betty Coney; Amy, Thelma, Cora and Gordon Morehouse; Mildred and Bertha Proffitt; Terrance, Stephen and Dorothy McNally; Eva and Charlotte Ruch; Jeannette, Alberta, George, Margaret and Frank Vinet; Joyce, Cherry and June Richard; Lucille and May Rice; Wilbur Graham; Arthur McKinnon; Gladys, Mary and Billy Graham; Betty Love; Clifford Stearn.

Although Phyllis and Elliott Love did not attend school that first year, they did come later on either to take correspondence or to work on their own.

The janitor work was usually done by one of the students. The job was sought because then even four or five dollars a month almost kept one in clothing and certainly made Eaton's catalogue more interesting. It did not take a lot of time to sweep because of course the floor was oiled to keep down the dust and there were no science rooms, washrooms or a gym to clean. Carrying in wood was a bit of a chore because the sticks were long and that big round stove gobbled up a pile of them every day. During the warm days of spring and fall, the heat from the sun was sufficient but it was different in winter. Forty below outside meant the same inside the school, so one got the fire going as quickly as possible. On such cold days the students would arrange their desks in a circle around the stove, as close as possible. Usually someone was paid extra to haul the water, although in August, 1934, the Board moved to dig a well on the school grounds. It was a seepage well and the janitor's duties were to include emptying this when required.

In August of 1931, the janitor work was given to Margaret Vinet at the rate of $5 per month.

The year ended with the decision to engage Mr. Al Alderman to audit the books for which he later received the sum of $3.

At the annual ratepayer's meeting on January 16, 1932, Mr. Ed Stearn was re-elected by acclamation leaving the School Board with the same members as the previous year. The other business at this meeting was the decision to build a log barn 24 feet by 24 feet with all work being donated. Later in January a motion was passed to requisition the Grande Prairie Municipal District for the net amount of $1115.

On July 28, 1932, two important motions were made.

Money owing on the school site was to be sent to the Lands and Mines Department and the school was to be painted cream trimmed with green. Peter McNally was given the contract to clear the school site for the sum of $30.

Mrs. Cowell left the district in June and Miss Isobel Horsely came to teach for $700 per year. Beginners that year were Bob McNally, Winthrop Graham, May Spiden, Sadie and Bud Gaboury.

The janitor work was again given to Margaret Vinet for $50 for the full term and $5 to Frank Vinet for carrying water for the ten months.

The School Board for 1933 was Mr. Ed Stearn as chairman, Mr. A. Vinet as trustee and Mr. Alex Love as both trustee and Secretary-Treasurer for which he was paid $25 a year. At this meeting the Municipal District of Grande Prairie was requisitioned for $302.

On June 9th, the Board moved to re-engage Miss Horsely for the 1933-34 term of two hundred days, grades 1 to 9 inclusive for $600 for the year. The other piece of business at this meeting was the decision to buy a clock to be used in the school room.

Although Lenora Ruch and Harold Whalen were the only beginners the school was filled to capacity. The Tranquility School was closed for this term and so their students attended Fitzsimmons.

As usual the annual meeting in January of 1934 opened with a discussion of the financial condition of the district. Mr. Charlie Milner was elected to office

and became Secretary-Treasurer for $25 for the year. Mr. Ed Stearn remained as chairman and Mr. Alex Love as trustee. This year a requisition of $350 was made for school expenses.

A Board meeting was called on May 19, 1934, to discuss the financial condition of the school. The Secretary was instructed to contact the municipal clerk about the possibility of receiving "any or all of the 1934 requisition".

On July 16th it was moved by Ed Stearn and seconded by Charlie Milner that the Secretary purchase new stove pipe and glass for windows as required. Another motion was made that the tender submitted by A. Vinet contracting to do work on the school grounds for $14 be accepted.

Miss Horsely left in June to be married, so Miss Stella Becker took over the school room duties at a salary of $600. Beginners that year were Lawrence Gaboury, Elsie Stearn and Edward Whalen. The Simpkins Family moved into the district and so Riley, Mickey and Alvin entered school.

Mildred Proffitt was given the Janitor's contract at a salary of $40 per year.

At the annual meeting in January, 1935, Mr. Ed Stearn was re-elected as trustee and became chairman of the Board although he resigned in July. Another ratepayer's meeting resulted in the election of Mr. Gene Gaboury as chairman, Mr. Charlie Milner as Secretary-Treasurer at a salary of $25 per year and Mr. Alex Love as trustee. They made a requisition that year for $275.

The ratepayers were concerned about the fuel problem for the school. It was decided that they would have to rely on donation work and so arranged for nine loads of wood.

An extract from the July 10th meeting shows a concern. "Discussion on fencing school grounds resulted in decision to fence — two wires, poplar posts, — work to be done by donation.??" Another item from the August 24th meeting shows how carefully the Board had to make financial decisions. Two cheques were written, $15.18 for the balance of teacher's salary and $9 for labor in the erection of the fence. Evidently the work on the fence was not donated.

Although Miss Stella Becker taught during September and October, she left on a world tour and was replaced by Harry Humphries.

Mr. Gene Gaboury remained as chairman of the School Board in 1936. Mr. Tom Sorensen was elected as trustee and Mr. Charlie Milner again filled the position of Secretary-Treasurer for $25 a year. At this ratepayer's meeting, it was moved by Mr. Gene Gaboury and seconded by Mr. Cecil Lebell that "the school house be free, upon application to the trustees, for any entertainment to any ratepayer provided 50 cents be paid to the janitor or the school cleaned". Vern Sorensen offered to provide lumber to seal the school at the cost of sawing only.

On June 4th, Mr. Humphries was given permission to excuse Grades 1, 2 and 3 during examinations of higher grades.

Mr. Humphries was offered $650 a year provided he taught grade 10 in the fall of 1936. He was later offered an extra $50 as an enticement which he accepted. His beginners that year were Vivian Foore, Olive Ruch and Andy McNally. Later while serving with the R.C.A.F. during World War Two, Harry Humphries lost his life.

On July 29, 1936, the janitor work was given to June Richard at the rate of $40 a year. The following is taken directly from the minutes of that same meeting.

August 10th was set as the day to paint the school and fix up the barn. It was decided to advertise this work calling for assistance, and if none is offered, those doing the work be paid at the rate of 20 cents per hour.

At the October 24th meeting two decisions were made. Mr. A. Vinet was given the contract to supply ten cords of wood for the school at $2.25 per cord but payment was to be deferred to the end of the school year. Further, it was decided to send the $5 donated by the girls' club to Mr. Fitzpatrick on the lumber bill and explain that the balance would be paid on the next year's requisition.

On October 27, 1937, the District's assessed valuation was $62,850 on which a grant of $270 could be obtained. Indebtedness on December 31, 1936 was $100 in teacher's slary.

At the annual meeting on January 23, 1937, Mr. Gene Gaboury, Mr. Tom Sorensen and Mr. Charlie Milner were returned to make up the School Board. Mr. Milner acted as Secretary-Treasurer, again at $25 per year which had to be turned in on taxes. Their requisition amounted to $635.

The financial situation was very bad because the Board had to offer Miss Josephine Price as teacher a salary of $650 which was $50 below the minimum. A ratepayer's meeting was called in November with Inspector L. A. Walker present. Although he was sympathetic he informed the meeting that a teacher's salary of $700 must be paid.

Miss Price had three beginners that year, Colleen Whalen, Alberta Ruch and Billy Milner. She left during the term and was replaced by Miss Marguerite Meiklejohn who completed this term and taught for the 1938-39 term as well.

Mr. Tom Sorensen resigned from the School Board and at the annual meeting in January, 1938, his place was taken by Mr. Jack Baskerville, who became the chairman. Mr. Gene Gaboury and Mr. Charlie Milner as Secretary were the other two members. A requisition for $500 was made to the Municipal District of Grande Prairie No. 739 in addition to that already owing the district from the municipality and the Government.

Beginners in the fall of 1938 were Alice Gaboury, Winnie McNally, George Spiden and Hans Ruch. Other students to come in were Charles and Edith Morehouse.

It was in 1938 that the Grande Prairie School Division No. 14 took over the management of the local schools within the municipality. A quote from the Board minutes of March, 1939 winds up the business of the Fitzsimmons School Board.

There was discussion about obtaining correspondence for some students. It was decided to advise parents concerned that the School Board no longer had control over the school's finances but

recommended that the parents write the Secretary of Divisional Board No. 14 to present their request. The Fitzsimmons School Board will write the Divisional Board recommending their request.

The Secretary of the Fitzsimmons School Board was instructed to turn over all books, papers, etc., pertaining to the school's business to the Secretary-Treasurer of School Division No. 14, Mr. George Patterson.

It is true that the school was the center of the community in the early days. It was the only public building available for any function whether it was a church service or a dance. There was always great interest expressed in a young lady teacher, not only by the parents from an educational point of view but by eligible bachelors with thoughts of romance. It was customary for the teacher to be invited into the homes for supper, perhaps several times during the term. After such an occasion the young people would walk her back to her boarding place. The difficulty in getting over or around mud holes in the road as well as protecting her from swarms of mosquitoes was probably an aid to the romantic young man.

During the winter, public dances were held in the school house. Music was supplied by fiddlers Harry Shinn, Pete Kebalo, Wes Brewer, and Henry Calliou, but the Lennes Orchestra from Debolt was always an attraction. Thinking of these dances reminds one of boiled coffee, salmon sandwiches, cake donated by the ladies attending, a program of local talent after lunch and sometimes fights.

Everyone looked forward to at least three social events each year, the Box Social, the Christmas Concert and the annual School Picnic.

The first Box Social was held in the Vinet home late in 1930 with music probably supplied by Harry Shinn and Wes Brewer. The proceeds from this Social was one of the first forms of revenue towards the financing of the school.

A Box Social was held for the benefit of the Fitzsimmons School. The sum of $30.20 — Thirty dollars and twenty cents was collected.

It was moved by Mr. A. Graham that the following bills be paid: Carried.

Tarriff Fees and Postage (2 large envelopes of .05 stamps — .03 com. — .07) — $7.65

Groceries for Box Social — $4.95

Papers signed by Commissioner — .35

Minute Book — Stamp Pad and Seal — Com. — .05 — $4.00

Stamps — .50

Total $17.45

Balance Cash on hand — $12.75

Mr. A. Vinet moved the meeting be adjourned. — Carried.

Secretary-Treasurer — Mrs. E. Stearn

Chairman — Ed Stearn

Paper signed by Commissioner — .50

The Box Social was usually quite a gay affair because the harvest was in, and everyone was ready for some recreation, besides which the money raised would be used for Christmas treats for the children. Many a young lady whispered certain clues into the ear of an admirer just before the auction of the basket. Sometimes other bidders would deliberately run the price of a basket lunch up to three or four dollars much to the delight of the crowd. Quite often the money would be sent to Eaton's along with the names and ages of all the children and they would make the gift selection.

Perparation for the Christmas Concert usually began in November. From then until the final performance there was practice, costume making and children dreaming of Santa Claus. If a child was fortunate enough to get new clothes at all it would be for the Christmas Concert. These affairs were held in the evening, so everyone was bathed and put to bed early the night before. Some families would reach the school well ahead of curtain time so they could get their horses in the barn or perhaps they were supplying a gas lamp for the evening. Even in those days when Santa had to travel by reindeer, he found the Fitzsimmons School bringing with him exciting gifts and the most delicious candy bags.

The Fitzsimmons School Board supported the annual school picnic each year by donating about five dollars toward expenses. There was a picnic supper as well as homemade ice-cream during the afternoon. There were softball games, horse shoe tournaments and novelty races. A parade of the children dressed in various costumes led off the first picnic held at the school.

One year there was a surprise performance by two bulls which Bill Graham had driven to the picnic and one in Vinet's pasture. At that time, the ball games were held near Vinet's house because the school yard had not yet been cleared.

As the story goes, Bill had his two bulls hitched to a stone boat on which the family was sitting as he drove in late for the ball game. The day was hot and his two bulls began snorting with irritation because they had been urged beyond their normal gait. Fred Vinet's bull had been standing in the shade of the trees, was rested and ready for battle. In any case, he took up the challenge and with a bellow of rage charged Bill's two bulls. Evidently there was total confusion as Bill's wife, Rosie, and the children fled for safety and Fred and Bill tried to untangle the bulls with the help of the dog. This was finally accomplished but there was much mending of harness before they could get back to the ball game.

Even though the financial responsibility was lifted from the School Board after the School Division No. 14 took over in 1938, there continued to be an Advisory Board made up of local people. This Board participated actively in the affairs of the district. On April 23, 1940, Wes Brewer wrote to Mr. George Patterson the following: "I am writing to you about the school fence. It is in very bad shape and should be fixed so the pupils can turn their horses out. The fence will need all new posts and the wire tightened."

The Local Board was allowed $5 for repairing the fence.

There were two teachers during the 1939-40 term. Miss Theoline Yaremko taught from September to December with Miss Ruth Axelson finishing the term. Beginners that year were Donald Foore, Edna Morehouse, Margaret Ruch and Sheila Spiden.

In the fall of 1940, Miss Gertrude Brightwell became the teacher with beginners Patricia Milner, and Jean Coney. Other children to enter the school during the year were Norman Graham, Pauline Miarecki, Margery Coney and the Edmund Gaboury children, Doris, Raymond, Yvonne and Florence.

On July 4, 1941, George Patterson of the Grande Prairie School Division No. 14 had correspondence with Harry Humphries, former teacher who was with the R.C.A.F. concerning past salary. According to Mr. Patterson, the future looked better. "Things here proceed about as usual although the district appears to be a bit more prosperous this year and there is evidence of a fair crop in the making."

Following is an extract from a letter written by Wes Brewer to the Divisional Board in February of 194x.

At the annual ratepayers meeting of the Fitzsimmons School District No. 4500 it was decided to make application to have the school house papered and kalsomined inside as the plain lumber with which it is finished is getting quite dark ."

The Board deferred action until the summer holidays.

During the 40's and early 50's, the country experienced a serious shortage of teachers, and it was at this time that many students took correspondence courses from the Department of Education with the help of Supervisors.

For the 1941-42 term the Fitzsimmons School had three supervisors: Miss Dorothy McKay from October to December, Miss Norma Armstrong for January and February and Miss Laura Berg from March until June. School did not start September 1st that year because of the excessive rainfall. There were five beginners in 1941: Leonard Gaboury, Tommy McNally, Freddie Sorensen, Heather Spiden and Evelyn Ruch.

Roads were indeed bad at this time as the following letters indicate. The first was written to Miss Norma Armstrong from George Patterson and said, "As requested we are forwarding by concurrent mail five bars of toilet soap for your school." The second was written by Miss Bette Tissington who succeeded George Patterson as Secretary of the Divisional Board to Mr. A. Vinet. "Mr. Cavett is again preparing to deliver supplies and has asked me to write you asking that you bring the oil can in from the school and leave it at Rooney's store where he will leave the supplies for you to pick up and take to the school."

Miss Evelyn Krantz taught the school for the 1942-43 term with these students entering school: George, Peter and Helen Czupryk, and Anna Sarmaga. There were no beginners.

The 1943-44 term was taught by Miss Velva Regnier with Donnie Sorensen, Albert Sorensen, and Larry Fells as beginners. Carol Regnier attended the school for this year only.

On May 31, 1944, Bette Tissington wrote to Wes Brewer who was still Secretary of the Local Board. "As for the barn, arrange to have someone clean it and submit the bill to this office. Water pail may be bought locally."

Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga taught the 1944-45 term with no new students beginning school.



Xmas party at school (Santa) — Jeff Dillabough and Kenny White.



Beginners at Fitzsimmons School, 1955. Wayne Gaboury, Jim Laverick, Lorraine White.

In the fall of 1945 the students were again taking correspondence under the supervision of Miss Germaine Albinati. However, Miss Pam Hunter taught during May and June. Dennis Brewer was the only beginner that year.

On April 15, 1946 Miss Albinati wrote to the Secretary of the Divisional Board: "The Fitzsimmons School is in such a pitiful state — Would it be possible for us to kalsomine it, paint the window sills and varnish the cupboards and teacher's desk?" She received a reply to the effect that it could be done over the May 24th weekend.

As the years went by there seemed to be less correspondence between the Local Advisory Board and the Central Board. This was probably due to the fact that roads were improved to the extent that the Central Board could deliver supplies, etc., and also supervise the maintenance of the school more closely.

Following is a list of the teachers or supervisors who were at the Fitzsimmons School from 1946 until it closed ten years later as well as the names of the beginners and others who attended.

The children took correspondence for the next four years. Miss Vivian Foore supervised during the 1946-47 term and there were no beginners. Miss Julia Podulsky was in charge from September, 1947 to February, 1948 when she left to be married. The remainder of the term was taken over by Miss Agnes Dedio. Mary Sorensen started school that fall. Miss Elsie Stearn supervised from September, 1948 to June, 1950. Elsie and Leon Repetowski and Keith Laverick were beginners in the fall of 1948.

The children took correspondence for September and October in 1950 under the supervision of Mrs. Lucille Gaboury but the remainder was taught by Mrs. Margaret White. Billy Steeves and Karen Kebalo attended the Fitzsimmons School that year, coming in from other schools.

The next two years were under the supervision of Miss Alma Tanchuk in 1951-52 and Miss Elsie Braun in 1952-53. Jackie Laverick started school in the fall of 1951 and David Repetowski, Elliott McNally and Maxine Sarmaga in 1952.

The last three years that the school operated were taught by Mrs. Margaret White. Bobby Kebalo and Kenny White started as beginners in the fall of 1953 followed by Donna Sarmaga, Debra Dillabough and Marlene McNally in September, 1954. The last beginners of the Fitzsimmons School were Wayne Gaboury and Jimmy Laverick in September, 1955.

At a meeting on June 29, 1956 the decision was made to close Fitzsimmons School and bus the students to the centralized school at Bezanson. By this time the Grande Prairie School Division No. 14 was no more as the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 was formed in 1951. The school site became again a part of the original homestead and the school house was sold to Ray and Jean Robideau who moved it and made it into a home.

FITZSIMMONS TELEPHONE LINE — by Tom Sorensen

A telephone line built in 1946 by local residents is an interesting feature of the Fitzsimmons story, because it was an example of simplicity and perfect co-operation. There was no government grant which seems so indespensable today. The residents just simply got together and built the line at a cost of about $250 to $300.

Initially there were twelve members on the line besides the Teepee Creek Store. Everyone pitched in and helped build it. It worked fine, and no one misused the line or made themselves a nuisance as far as I remember.

It was in operation for about ten years. By that time some people had moved away, and some had dropped out so there were finally only four members left.

The government line came in eventually, but the little line definitely served a very useful purpose in its time.

The names of the original subscribers were: A. Vinet, G. Dillabough, G. Gaboury, Harry Shinn, C. Girlish, W. Wageman, C. Wageman, Pete Kebalo, Don Brown, J. V. Sorensen, Ejner Sorensen, T. Sorensen, Edmund Gaboury and the Teepee Creek Store.

THE NORTH STAR CLUB

The North Star Club was organized in 1961. It began as one of several branch clubs of the Bezanson Ladies' Aid.

The organization meeting was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Sarmaga. Hazel Weegar and Sadie Sarmaga attended and assisted with the organizing. Officers elected that evening were: June Kochalyk — President, Ann Bulford — Vice-President and Belle Heasler as Secretary-Treasurer. Seven members joined at this time.

The club was named by Mrs. Martha Regnier. In those years the Club was quite active and funds were raised in various ways — bazaars, bake sales, raffels and sales of quilts made by members. The proceeds from these efforts were used for various charitable purposes. Cards and gifts were given to patients in hospital and numerous cash donations were given to both church and school and also to other community projects such as the Curling Rink, 4-H Club and to the Peace School of Hope.



Mrs. Regnier, Mrs. Bulford.



North Star Club Birthday Party for Mrs. Regnier 60th birthday. Front Row — Mrs. Regnier, Sadie Sarmaga, Olive Stewart, Dorothy Laverick. Back Row — June Kochalyk, Flossie Sorenson, Bertha Dillabough, Bell Heasler, Ann Bulford, Molly Laverick, Nita Sarmaga, Marguerite Laverick.

In 1968 the Club decided to become an Interdenominational club and from that time on has been known as "The North Star Friendship Club". Its main purpose now is as a friendly entertainment club but we still make some effort to contribute in small ways to charity.

Card parties are held every two weeks during the winter at the homes of members. The fee of 25 cents for playing cards has remained unchanged for fifteen years. We still manage to give prizes for the highest scores as well as a consolation prize for the lowest. At Christmas time we have a "Christmas Card Party" with treats for everyone. This past Christmas (1976) our party was held in the Legion Hut — courtesy of our Local Legion members. There were fifty-four people present for a lovely turkey supper, after which we had our card party.

Each summer a club picnic is held for members and families. The club has also honored three of their members on the occasions of their 70th birthdays. The ladies so honored were: Mrs. Martha Regnier in 1964, Mrs. Kate Bulford in 1966 and Mrs. Mary Menard in 1968.

The 1976-77 slate of officers are: Nita Sarmaga — President, Martha Antonio — Vice-President and Armyna McNally as Secretary.

Five Mile



EMIL AUGER FAMILY

Born in 1904 Emil Auger came with his mother and father to the Peace River country in 1914. His father homesteaded the S.E. 27-71-5-6.

During the 1918 flu the family was hit very hard. Emil was a very sick boy, nurse Mrs. Joe Davis was helping with the patients. The doctor said Emil was dead, but nurse Davis could still see a bit of life, she rolled him back and forth putting pressure on his lower chest and brought him out of it. Emil went to Five Mile school walking nearly three miles. There were many deaths in the Auger family in the 1918 flu.

Emil worked for Frank Donald and also for Alex Wishart in the draying business. Over the years he has done many different types of work.

He married Dorothy Lanctot (whose parents had a grocery store here in the early days). They had three children; Leo, Eileen and Norma. His wife passed away when the children were quite young. Emil had the job of raising a young family as well as making a living. His son Leo and family live in Wembley. His two daughters, Eileen Moore and Norma Green live in Ontario.

Emil lived in Clairmont for a few years. He is now a resident of Central Park Lodge. He can tell many interesting stories of the early days but refuses to read

or write. Gerald Hutt now owns Emil's father's homestead.

ALPHONSE AND MARIE BAYENS

Alphonse Bayens was born in Aygem, Belgium on the 21 of February, 1886. He was the eldest son of a family of three, having only one brother and one sister.

Hearing a lot of the opportunity of owning land in Canada, and not having much chance for advancement in the country in which he was born, prompted Alphonse, as a young man to come to Canada, and then to the Peace River Country.



Mrs. Bayens.



Mr. Bayens.

He first arrived in Canada in 1911 and found work in the coal mines around Drumheller. He worked for several years on the railroad around Grand Cache, and on into the Peace River Country.

In 1914 he filed on a homestead, N.W.¼ 14-71-5-W. 6. He worked on this in the summer and returned to the mines in the winter time.

Trying to get a quarter section of land into production in those times was a difficult task for one alone.

In the fall of 1925 Alphonse decided to make a trip back to Belgium. While over there, he renewed acquaintances with a former friend Marie Emma Goossens, who was born and grew up in the city of Mere, Belgium. Wedding bells rang for them on the 24th of February, and in April of the same year the two of them came back to Canada, to their homestead farm, in the Peace River Country.

Leaving the place of her birth, her family, and friends was a difficult undertaking for Marie. Not being able to speak English made it extremely difficult for her. Fortunately she had a good neighbor Maggy Blimke, who spent much time, teaching her enough English so they could at least converse amongst themselves.

Their first house was a log homesteaders shack. Conveniences were non-existent, they worked hard, grew big gardens, milked cows and kept pigs and chickens. They lived in this cabin until a new and better house was built in 1936. Their first luxury item was also purchased then, a radio, which they listened to almost continuously, for the first while. Being able to listen to the news casts was a feature attraction.

Another quarter of land adjoining his original homestead was bought from Anton Cider, bringing his operations to a half section.

To them were born two daughters, Marie and Yvonne. Marie Ames now lives in Bezanson. Yvonne Blimke remaining on the family farm.

Alphonse passed away April 26, 1969, his wife Marie predeceased him on December 27, 1961.

MR. AND MRS. ALBERT BLIMKE

Albert Blimke came to Grande Prairie in 1912 at age sixteen with his father John filed by proxy on



Albert Blimke family.



Albert Blimke hauling wheat in 40 below weather, 1930's.

the N.W.¼ 28-71-5-W. 6, three miles east and a half mile north of Grande Prairie. On September 23, 1918, he married Martha Hanniman, they resided on his homestead until his death in 1954. In 1956 Martha bought a house in Grande Prairie and lived there until her death in 1967.

There were seven children; Bernard, Arthur, Errol, Cecil, Don, Reta and Irene. Cecil passed away in 1950. Reta (Mrs. Luc Demers) and Don reside in Edmonton, Alberta, and Irene (Mrs. Bill Zayha) now resides in Creston, B.C. The rest of the family are still farming in the Grande Prairie area.

BERNARD BLIMKE FAMILY

I, Bernard, son of Albert and Martha Blimke was born in Grande Prairie on August 30, 1920. I am the eldest of a family of seven having had four brothers; Art, Errol, Cecil, Don and two sisters, Reta (Mrs. Luc Demers) and Irene (Mrs. Bill Zayha). Cecil passed away in 1950.



Bernard Blimke family.

Living in the Five Mile School District, I attended the country school for my elementary grades. I quit school at an early age to help out on my fathers farm. As I enjoyed the farm, I took out a homestead lease on the S.½ 11-72-5-W. 6. Later my lease became a Homestead Sale, which I bought and farmed. Being raw land this took a lot of work to brush, break and get under cultivation. For several years there were only 131 acres broke. Now I have 311 acres on the half section. This kept me busy during the summer, but during the winter months I worked in the bush camps, a couple of them being "the Big 6", John Bickell's timber in the Debolt area, and Dorcheid's, in the Crooked Creek area.

In 1953 I married Yvonne Bayens, youngest daughter of Alphonse and Marie Bayens, who also lived and farmed in the Five Mile Creek School District. We took up residence on the Bayens farm, W.½ 14-71-5 which we have made our permanent home.

We have four children, one son, Dale born in 1955 and three daughters, Maxine born in 1958, Eleanor born in 1961 and Colleen born in 1963.

ARTHUR AND FLORENCE BLIMKE AND FAMILY — by Florence Blimke

Arthur was born in 1921, second son of Albert and Martha Blimke. He grew up on his parents homestead, three miles east and three-quarters of a mile north of Grande Prairie. He attended Five Mile Creek school quite regularly during the winter when he and his brothers drove in a heated caboose. However, in spring and fall more exciting ways to spend the day were found in the bush and sloughs that are now cultivated fields. He and his brothers would start out in the morning with lunch pails filled to the brim, but there were rabbits to hunt with the sling shots, traps to check and the many other joys farm boys discover in the woods, so Arthur's desk was often vacant. One late fall day the boys started off a little early in order to check the traps they had set out in a round-about way to school. The first one held a skunk. Well, nobody wanted to hit it, so Bernard got a long stick and started to lead it to the creek to drown. All went well until Arthur figured the skunk was going too slow and booted it. Bernard and all ran, but not fast enough to escape the spray. No use thinking of school then, and it just happened they knew where more skunks were under the floor of a nearby shack, so they pulled up a few boards, put the trap on a stick and poked a skunk into the trap, lifted it out, killed it, and back for another. All told the boys got nine skunks. They carried them home proudly on two long poles. Art and Bernard carried five, Errol and Cecil carried four. Dusk was falling as they neared home. Their Dad, working in the field saw, and probably smelled them coming. He didn't say much, and they went on home. A different reception there, as Mother wouldn't let them come near the house. They had to strip outside and wash down with soap and water. They buried their clothes in the ground. The next day, even with clean clothes and well scrubbed bodies the Blimke boys were sent home because none of the other children would stay in the schoolhouse with them!

In the spring and fall Arthur helped his father on the farm. At 18 quit school, worked at home, at Buffalo Lakes sawmill and served with the Armed Forces for three years. After being discharged from the Army in the spring of 1946 he was farming with his father and brothers when I (Florence) came into his life and we decided to buy a farm of our own.

Here I discovered a vastly different way of farming and loved the west with its friendly, unhurried way of life at that time.

Arthur and I were married November 25, 1947 and moved to the farm he had bought from Omer Goossens. This was three quarters of land, six miles east and one and a half miles south of Grande Prairie. The N.E. 14-71-5-W. 6th we called the Johnston quarter; S.W. 13-71-5-W. 6th, the Davis quarter, and N.W. 13-71-5-W. 6th, the Henry Fortier quarter, in memory of previous owners. There was a one room log cabin on the Davis place on the edge of the Bear Creek banks where we lived until 1958. We farmed with horses for several years and grew a big garden. We hauled our water from a shallow well on the Henry Fortier place and melted a lot of snow in winter in a



Wedding picture, Art and Florence (Lepine) Blimke, Nov. 25, 1947.

barrel that stood beside the cook stove. Our cattle and horses were watered at Bear Creek.

We had a caboose to drive in winter and borrowed Norman Blimke's buggy in summer for our infrequent trips to town. Our first baby, which was stillborn, arrived on a rainy night in August. Arthur walked to Pellerins, and Ernie Pellerin drove me to the hospital in his truck over very muddy roads, and got me there in time. Many other times we were helped out of difficulties by our good neighbours, Norman and Herb Blimke.

One winter day in 1954 when I had three small children and Arthur was across Bear Creek cutting wood, a small middle aged man knocked on my door and asked to come in. He had left a packsack at the side of the house and I had no idea who he was or where he came from. His feet were frozen and he was hungry. He stayed all day and asked a lot of questions, and I assured him my husband would be home soon, but I knew it would be evening before he came. Arthur came at dusk and soon after that George Gibson came to visit. They sized up the situation and told the man they'd take him to the Doctor for his feet. While they were hitching the horses to the sleigh the man took off on them and ran down the creek hill. George drove to Pellerins to phone the RCMP and met them at Steve McNally's corner where they had to leave their car. They found the man several miles up the creek and took him to the hospital. He was a transient and spent several months in hospital. That was my most harrowing experience during the years we lived there in isolation. My sister and brother-in-law from Ontario came to visit in 1970 and stood by that cabin and said, "If we had known you were living here we would have worried about you", but I had a happy life there and didn't care about doing without passable roads, telephone or electricity. Paul, Grant, Jean and Ross were born while we lived there.



Sunday afternoon at Art Blimke's, 1948. Front: Gus, Neil, Esther, Joan, Gail, Marjory and Frances Blimke. Second row: Mary, Dora, Agnes Blimke. Back row: John Jr., Gus Sr., Art, Allan and Martin Blimke.

In 1957 the road was high graded to where we had built our new house on the Henry Fortier quarter and we moved there in January of 1958. Paul was going to school and the bus picked him up at our gate so getting the children to school was no longer a problem. We got the telephone in soon after, which was a simple matter of contacting Alberta Government Telephones. Art and Norman Blimke supplied the poles, brushed the route and installed the poles and wire in order to get service through a rural telephone co-op. With 15 subscribers, each one with their own "longs and shorts", it was a busy line but a great comfort and convenience. In 1961 we got electric power through a Rural Electrification Association.

Lloyd was born in 1958 and when he neared school age in 1964 I went to the St. Joseph's Business College for a refresher course and took a full time job with the Veterans Land Administration in August. For three years I drove an old 1946 Dodge which was at its best in mud and snow, I had very little trouble getting to and from work.

Arthur continued to farm full time and in 1965 purchased N.W. 28-71-5-W. 6th from his mother. The house where Arthur lived with his parents had been vacant for several years and wrecked by vandals so we bought a surplus house from the airport and moved it near the old house where we have the advantage of the spruce, ash and maple trees planted years ago. We also treasure cedar and basswood trees which his

parents had received from relatives in Ontario. Our expenses in 1968 were high and farm income low so Arthur too took outside employment at the Tissington Industries plant at the Airport.

By 1970 we were comfortably settled in our new home, with water and sewer facilities, good roads and school bus service at the gate. Paul finished school and was working at a seed cleaning plant. Grant, Jean, Ross and Lloyd were attending school in Grande Prairie.

GUSTAAF BLIMKIE — by Lawrence Blimkie

My dad, Gustaaf Blimkie came to the Grande Prairie District to file on a homestead in 1912.

In the winter of 1914 he went back to Renfrew, Ontario to bring the rest of us out west. There was mother, myself, the oldest of the family, Herbert, Frances, Norman, Gertrude and Austin.

We left Ontario in February by train, along with my mother's sister Martha, Uncle John's family, Aunt Martha, cousins Agnes, Allen, Bill and John. The other three boys were in Grande Prairie. Uncle John having come to Grande Prairie to homestead in 1911. Albert, John and Martin had come up a year later.

When we arrived in Edson, the end of rail travel at that time, we were met by Uncle John and August.

We were in Edson about a week or ten days, getting things ready for the trip to Grande Prairie. We had about four teams and sleighs loaded with machinery and household goods. One sleigh was a caboose for us kids and the women.

The weather was pretty good. I can remember hills so steep in places it took three teams of horses to get the loads to the top.

We arrived at Uncle John's place in the afternoon and stayed there until the rest got there near evening. Dad, mother and Aunt Martha got us kids rounded up, and we went to Dad's homestead about one-quarter of a mile from Uncle John's. Dad had built a house and barn the summer before.

In 1914 they opened the Five Mile Creek School, for the first year there were only the Blimkie kids, (five of us) and Bill and Allan from Uncle John's family. Later we were joined by Wes and Marguerite Mills.

Dad had some land broke the summer before, so we were able to put some crop in that spring. More land was cleared, all by hand and we kids would go and help burn the brush piles.

In 1918-1919 the year of the flu, mother died September 2, 1919. Aunt Martha kept house for Dad and us kids. She got married to Albert Blimkie in 1918, but stayed with us until they built their house. After they moved Dad and us kids batched by ourselves. Gertie and Austin returned to Ontario to live with an aunt and uncle. I quit school at the age of 16 and helped Dad on the farm. Some of the neighbors at that time were Tom Lamb, Joe Hill, Dan Murray, Mike McGee and Jim and Henry Fortier.

Gustaaf worked for several years for Captain Bradley's ranch. A few years later he purchased Emil Augers quarter N.W. 24-71-5-6. He retired in 1952. He spent the latter years of his retirement in Grande Prairie with his daughter Frances, who cooked for many years at the York Hotel and was called on to supply the menus for many dignitaries. She is now retired and lives in Grande Prairie.

Herb got married in the fall of 1925 to Margaret Smith. They farmed her dad's place. They have three children; Bert, Robin, and Anne, they are all married.

After Frances finished school she kept house for Dad, and the rest of us kids.

I was married to Matilda Frank in 1927. We have five children, four girls; Anita, Verna, Edna, and Kay, and one boy, Ivan. They are all married except Anita, who lives with us.

Norman married in 1933 to Dora Gibson. They have five children, two boys, Gus and Neil, and three girls, Marj., Joan and Gail. Marj. passed away in 1973. Joan and Gail are both married. Frances never did marry.

The three youngest of the family were; Gertie, Austin and Archie. (Archie died of the flu in 1918.) Gertie and Austin went back East to live with an Aunt and Uncle in Admaston, Ontario.

I stayed on the farm until 1930, then started working in town. I worked for Frank Donald for a time. After he died, George Cave and I bought out his transfer contract. I stayed in that until 1951, when I worked at odd jobs for awhile. Finally I worked for Horne and Pitfield Foods, and stayed until I retired in December, 1975.

HERBERT AND MAGGIE BLIMKIE FAMILY

Herbert married Margaret Smith in 1925 and resided with Margaret's father, William Smith until 1930 when they moved to their own farm which was purchased from Anna Morgan. Still residing on the original farm they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1975. They have three children; Herbert (Bert), Robert and Ann.



Four generations: seated, Gus Blimke Sr. Standing: Herb Blimke, Bert Blimke holding baby Brad Blimke.

Bert has four sons; Brad, Ken, John and Norman, they reside in Carmangay, Alberta. Bert married Anne Anderson of Champion, Alberta and has worked for 25 years as an agent for the Alberta Wheat Pool.

Robert married Dolores Probst of Beaverlodge in 1955 and has four sons; Laurie, Brent, Glen and Dean and resides in Grande Prairie. Robert runs a mixed farming operation on the old Wesley Mills farm east of the city, sells breeding stock from his Registered Hereford Herd. Music has played a big role in Robert's life, playing in local orchestras in dance halls all over the Peace Country.

Ann married to Bill McKenzie of Prince Rupert and resides at Prince George with a family of three; Bill, Carolyn, and Louise. Ann graduated and received her R.N. in 1957 and pursued her nursing career since that time.

LEVERTON AND ANNE CANNING

Leverton Canning was born in Caledon, Ontario in 1876. He came west as a young man and bought land at Lamont, Alberta in 1900. It was here that he met and married his wife, Anne Jane Campbell. They farmed and ran a blacksmith shop at Lamont for the next 27 years. Here they also raised a family of seven children; Pauline, Calvin, Gladys, Gordon, Elmer, Dorothy Jean, Elsie Eileen.



Leverton and Annie Canning.

In 1927 the Peace River fever hit them, and they moved with their family to Grande Prairie, arriving in the spring of 1928. Upon their arrival in Grande Prairie, they purchased the Percy Tooley half section and the Sicily half section surrounding Crystal Lake, just to the northeast of town. They also bought a two storey house in Grande Prairie, where they lived and the children attended school. They continued to farm until they sold the half east of Crystal Lake to son Calvin in 1940. In 1946 the other half was sold to Jack Caldwell. About this time son, Gordon, went overseas with the first contingent and returned in 1945.

Upon retirement they resided in Grande Prairie for a few years before moving to Edmonton. Leverton Canning passed away at Edmonton in February, 1954 at the age of 78 years.

Mrs. Canning later married George Crawford and resided in Dawson Creek until the time of his death. She then returned to Grande Prairie where she lived for several years before moving to Lamont, where she still resides at the age of 78. Their original house and barn still exist. They were moved to the country just east of the four mile corner by Murry Faul who had purchased the Percy Newton farm. Central Park Lodge now stands on the original site of their home.

Pauline married Vern Treffry and lives at Wainwright, Alberta. Calvin married Pearl Quinn of Elmworth and still resides in Grande Prairie. Gladys married Ivan Morrison and also resides in Grande Prairie. Gordon married Ione Ellis of Grimshaw and lives on a farm at Lamont, Alberta. Elsie Eileen passed away in December of 1936 while training for a nurse in Edmonton. Dorothy Jean married Allan Roddick and now lives in Forestburg, Alberta. Elmer married Marion Weaver of Peace River and now lives in Dawson Creek, B.C.

CALVIN AND PEARL CANNING

I was born in Lamont, Alberta where I received my education and came to Grande Prairie in June, 1928 with the rest of my family. After working at home and in a garage for a year, I rented land at Elmworth where I met and married my wife Pearl Quinn. We then moved five miles east of Grande Prairie to the Wiley Sawyer farm for two years. This farm is now owned by George Werner.



Calvin and Pearl Canning.

After a summer of sickness and an operation in the fall, we found out what really good neighbors were like. They all arrived in the yard one day with a load of wood each, then the sawing outfit came and sawed and piled our winter's supply of wood for which we were very grateful. After two years of poor crops we moved back to Elmworth, where we farmed and milked cows and sold butter and cream. At this time my father, Leverton Canning decided to cut down on his work. He

sold the Sicily half section on the north and east side of Crystal Lake to me.

We built a house and moved into our own home in 1940. Here we farmed for the next 26 years. During this time we also hauled the rural mail east of Grande Prairie for two years to supplement our income. There were some pretty hard trips in the winter with a team and covered cutter, and in the spring with the Model A in the mud. But the mail must go through regardless of weather and roads and it certainly wasn't all bad. We got to know a lot of very nice people.

I then went to work at the Northern Planer Mill until it burned down. I worked for Hector Morrison and John Bickel when they started to build the Plywood Plant and continued to work when the plant went into operation. They were bought out by North Canadian Forest Industries and I continued to farm and work for them for 23 years before retiring in 1974.

We sold the farm in 1966 and moved to Grande Prairie where we still reside.

During these years we raised five children; Carol, Larry, Dennis, Donald and Bonnie. They all received their education in Grande Prairie. Donald and Bonnie attended SAIT and College in Calgary after graduating. They are all married and we have seven grandchildren. Dennis, Donnie and Bonnie live in Calgary, Carol and Larry still reside in Grande Prairie.

WILLIAM CARD FAMILY

Born in Pennsylvania, William Nelson Card married Elizabeth Ballantyne of Manitowaming, Ontario. The Cards came to the Peace Country in 1911. Homesteading at Dimsdale. In the late 1920's, they came to the Five Mile District renting land from Jack Thompson, a half section S.½ 17-71-5-6, which he purchased from Jack Penman and Chester Miller. They lived in a log shack with no floor. Mr. Card also used tobacco grown by Joe Fortier. He bought it by the sack full and didn't bother to fill his pipe from anything but the sack.

Lydia and Hilda went to school at the Five Mile School for quite a number of years. They did a lot of horseback riding and worked the little bit of land that was broken up at that time with horses.

Several of the Card family took up homestead land on the Wapiti. Bill lived on his, proved it up and sold it.

The family consisted of Minerva, who was already married when they moved here; Francis, Lydia, Hilda, Willie, Nelson and Earl who passed away in 1927. Mr. Card passed away in January, 1935, Mrs. Card passed away in May of 1949 and Hilda in the early 1970's.

TONY CEIDI

Tony Ceidi (Sider). Tony was a bachelor and hunter. He homesteaded on the S.W. 14-71-5-6, sometime before 1917. He was a wonderful neighbor. He was a Czechoslovakian. He later sold to Alphonse Bayens and went on a trap line across the Smoky that was the last we heard of him. Bernard Blimkie now farms his land.

LOUIS COURTIER

Louis Courtier — homesteaded the N.W. 23-71-5-6. The 1918-19 flu hit the family very hard. After the flu had died down in Grande Prairie a priest and another fellow drove to the country surrounding the hamlet to see how people were. There was four bodies at the Courtier home and the rest were very ill. Francis Blimkie and her dad later bought the place. They lived there for sometime then sold to Steve McNally. He subdvided keeping 40 acres and Alex Hartley owns the rest.

INEZ AND JOSEPH DAVIS — by Dana Wilson

My parents came to the Grande Prairie area when I was about five years old. They came from Graham Island, in the Queen Charlotte Islands, where I was born. Mother being a nurse, heard they needed nurses in Grande Prairie, so persuaded my father to move there.

In 1918 he filed on a homestead six miles east and two miles south of Grande Prairie, in the Five Mile area. We lived there until my mother sold out in 1938.

We had many hardships over the years. I remember living on little potatoes, eggs and milk all one winter, as it took all the money to buy feed for our livestock. We had a team of horses, one cow and a dozen hens. All the large potatoes were sold, so we ate the little ones.

Mother nursed through the flu epidemic and at the end was brought home sick with it herself. I was eight years old when mother quit nursing. My father took care of me when she was away.

At the age of seven I saw the biggest moose in the country. I was at the edge of a slough picking wild strawberries (which I loved.) I heard a noise, there was a big bull moose, standing over me. I was scared and so was he. He looked ten feet tall and had big horns. I jumped up and ran for the house. When I looked back he was out of sight.

My family made a living by growing garden produce, for a few years. We were usually blessed with a good garden, but there was not much money in it. We had good garden soil and plenty of water for it.

When I became of school age, the only school in the district was Five Mile. It was six miles from home, so was too far for me to go. When I was nine the school was moved two miles closer, so I attended once in a while.

In 1923 my brother Joe was born, so I was babysitter most of the time. Our house on the homestead was a log house which was added to several times. Mother always enjoyed fixing it up.

We used the coal oil lamps for lighting, and had a lantern for the outside. We heated with wood. We had our heater in the cellar, as this kept our floor nice and warm. Our stove in the cellar was an old hotel stove and took a six foot log. We didn't have to fill it very often. Mother had house plants blooming all year round.

Our main transportation was the horse and buggy, and bob sled. In 1926 my parents bought a car. We didn't use it much as mother thought it would run away with her.

In 1926 my father became weed inspector for the

municipality of Grande Prairie. He held that job until 1937. In 1928 he was the weed supervisor for all of the north country, travelling to Peace River, McLennan and Donelly, etc. He quit that because he was away from home too much. He continued working out of Grande Prairie.

In 1923 when Joe was born, mother took her washing to Grande Prairie and met Mrs. Carpenter for the first time.

Mrs. Carpenter did washing for people and Mr. Carpenter worked for Mr. Dunlop at the livery stable. Charlie, Ada and Martha were the only children at home at this time. Ed and Jim were at the coast and Ethel and Howard O'Brien were away. The Carpenters moved into our district about 1920.

In 1937 my father moved to Peachland, B.C., as mother had sold and moved out previously. He passed away two years later. My mother is still alive and will be 93 on May 1st, 1977.

WILLIAM DRYNAN

William Drynan lived on the N.E. 20-71-5-6. It is said that he and his brother and sister walked through this territory before the turn of the century, on their way to the Klondike Gold Rush. He settled on this quarter in the early 1900's, each year for many years he would go back to the Klondike taking with him eggs, butter, meat, etc., to sell along the way. Of course by this time he had some means of transportation. He finally settled down to farming. At one time he owned eight quarters of land. Some he had bought from the Indians who had homesteaded around Jack Pine Lake a half a school section and a quarter bought for tax sale.

He was always active in community affairs. Serving as one of the trustees on the first Board of the Five Mile School District. He was always willing to give a helping hand and was especially good to the Indians who were his neighbors.

For sometime it looked like he was going to give up his bachelorhood. He courted Miss Pearson, matron at the hospital for a number of years. During this time he fixed up the house and built a new barn. A barn dance was held at his place, which was quite a common thing in those days. Everyone had a wonderful time and those that were there will never forget it.

Bill farmed all his land with horses, the last years he owned a D2 Cat. Henry Lawrence and Ken Palmer of Grande Prairie worked for him in the early 30's. He also hired his Indian neighbors. He kept a large herd of beef cattle and in the summer he and Billy Salmond would take their herds and turn them out for summer pasture between Bear Creek and the Wapiti. Jim Ryan, Dolphus Lenny and Johnny Versailes used to ride herd on them. In the fall when they decided winter was coming everyone in the neighborhood rode herd on them. They would come back across the creek in many places and were in everyones grain fields. Bill had the first combine in the area. It was motor driven and pulled by horses.

Bill finally got too old to keep it all going. He sold his cattle and most of the land. He passed away in the 1950's over ninety years of age and still a bachelor. The hill straight east of town on Richmond Ave., is still known as Drynan's hill. Lee Johnson and Floyd Gable own most of his land now.

EVANS FAMILY — written by Mildred Lawrence

Richard John Evans was born at Carno, North Wales in 1881. In 1883 the family came by boat to the United States, taking six long months to reach Columbus, Ohio, where they settled. In July of 1896 the family decided to come to Canada. The only means of transportation being by covered wagon. Due to hardships on the trip they only got as far as Ovando, Montana. There, grandad homesteaded and built his own house. He was a stone mason by trade. In 1970 when my husband and I visited there, the house was still in good shape. Being one of the older ones in a family of fourteen, dad went to work at eleven years of age with very little education. He worked in lumber mills until 1909. In 1910 he bought land and farmed near hall, Montana. He sold his farm in 1914.



Evans family, 1924.

On February 10, 1915, he married my mother Elsie A. McLelland at Ovanda. They answered an inspiration to come to the Peace River Country and arrived in Grande Prairie in May, 1917. They homesteaded on the N.E. 10-71-5-6, cleared a building sight and put up a log cabin, shelter for a cow, and some chickens in the next couple of years. Dad worked as sawyer in the sawmills for Cooke Bros., Shortreed and Rosser, Harry Adair and others in the winter. In the summer he worked for the village of Grande Prairie digging ditches by hand and building roads, also he and mother brushed and broke a portion of their land each year. This was done by hand with the axe and horses on a walking plow. They also had a cow or two, chickens and a large garden. What they didn't use was sold or given to others.

I, Mildred was born in the old log hospital, August 1, 1918. Mother was near death when Dr. L. J. O'Brien came. It wasn't long until she was better and we were able to come home. Elva was born June 16, 1921 with Bella McDonald as midwife. Elsie was born, January 21, 1923 with the help of Margaret Smith and my dad. Both were born at home.



Evans family — 1939.

The folks finally got enough land and livestock to care for so dad was able to stay home and make a living. He rented some school land from the government and mother filed on S.E. 10-71-5-6. In the summer they were busy clearing more land, haying, gardening, etc. In the winter dad hauled logs, posts and wood to sell to supplement the income. Posts sold two for 5c. Wagon box of wood sawed, by hand, split and delivered was $2.00 a box. He supplied Dixons, Foy's, O'Brien, Crummy's, Guthrie's and many more with wood.

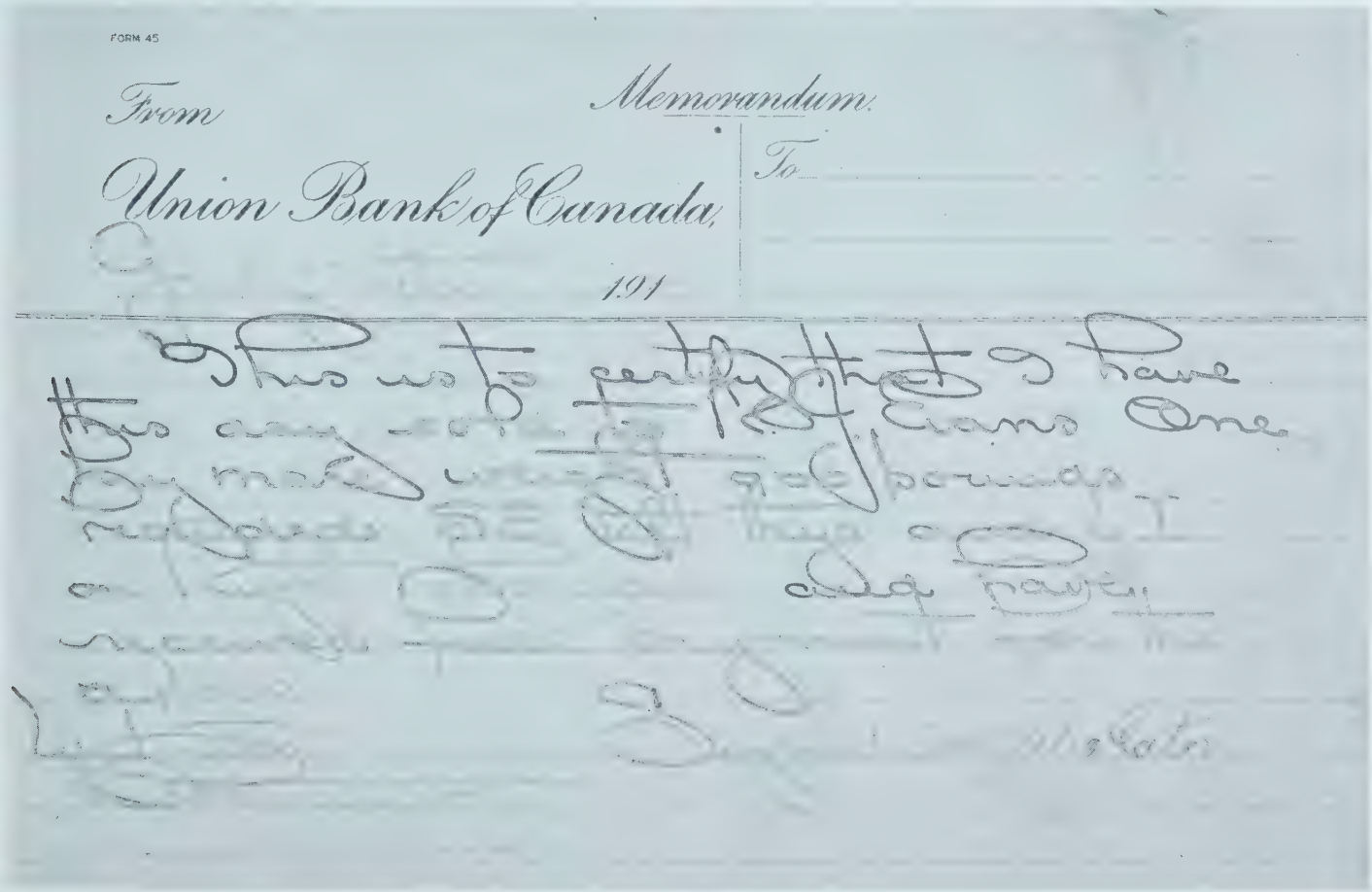
In 1928 Nap Pellerin built a frame house for us. Before it was finished the depression came. Wheat was $1.00 a bushel at threshing time. Everyone expected it to go to $1.25 a bushel but instead it dropped. Most people sold at 65c and by the next fall it was .11c. Hogs less than $2.00 each, 1200 pound cows delivered to Weicker in Sexsmith brought $8.00.

Money was heard of but not seen. Many more turned to hauling wood and posts. Living on the road by the Creek crossing we would count over 70 teams and four ups daily, some from as far away as Clairmont.

Our food all came from the farm. Flour bran and wheatlets from our own wheat which was taken to the flour mill to be ground. Coffee from cracked wheat, browned in the oven. We used coal oil lights or lard candles. Water came from a shallow well in the summer, melted snow in the winter. The cattle were driven daily about 1½ miles to Bear Creek in the winter for their water. We grew every kind of vegetable and fruit, even tobacco and peanuts. We hadn't any money for entertainment but that didn't stop us from having fun. Our board floors had cracks in them, some houses had no floors. Our bathrooms were out yonder. But we had house parties. Nearly everyone played instruments or sang or played cards. There would be such crowds at these parties. We also had parties, Xmas programs, picnics, etc., at the old Five Mile School. Musicians were Carpenter boys, our family, Mel Rodacker and Bill Remple, Mel Tallon and Bredesons, Bergs and many others.

Over the years both mother and dad took their turn on the board of trustees and on the entertainment committees for the Five Mile District.

There was sawing and threshing bees. The men all


FORM 45

From

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Memorandum.

To

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working from sunrise until after dark. The women kept very busy cooking, tending the children, and doing chores. Everyone got very tired, it was a rewarding tiredness, the reward of working together and accomplishment of getting things done.

There were many bachelors in our area. Dave Barber (a trader), Jack Hunter, Charlie Hughes, Hans (a Norwegian), Paul Mozzler, Al Barrett, Mr. Lake. We had another bachelor whose residence was in the Crystal Creek district. Most of his time was spent in our area courting our young teachers. He was a wonderful fellow and we would have all been very happy if he would have married one of them. This was Hubert Manning.

There are a good number of families who moved away who we all remember. The Carpenter family, Newtons, Willis Patterson family, Lemky and Fogles families, John Ordway, Ray and Bertha Craven.

The early settlers spent many hours of loneliness while the men were away for the winter, the family was at home keeping things going. A little poem I have, written by dad in the winter of 1918-19 reflects this.

I'm sitting thinking, as the hours pass by.
Of a darling little baby, that belongs to wife and I,
They are living on a homestead, while I'm sawing in a mill.
Trying to gain a livelihood, up in the old Burnt Hill.
Oft' from my sleep I waken, when I dream I see her smile.
And I see her little brown eyes, looking at me all the while.
How I long to be there with her, every night and every day.
For I know she'll always love me, when my hair is good and gray.
When I'm standing at the saw husk, with a lever in my hand.
Sizing up the jack pine timber, and watching every man.
I see her mother's eyes before me, as in the days of yore.
When she told me "yes she'd have me," and be mine forever more.
She has filled her promise faithfully, we're more pals every day.
And her and I and Babe are happy, when near or far away.
They are fixing up the home, while I'm working in the mill.
A few miles in the timber, in a place called the Burnt Hill.

Yes times were rough but we were happy though lonely at times. Dad passed away January 19, 1952 at the age of 71. Elsie married Percy Rigler of Crystal Creek, raised a family of seven, Elva married Ken Ashley of Montreal and raised a family of seven. I, Mildred, married Cecil Lawrence. We raised a family of six. Mother is a resident of Central Park Lodge in Grande Prairie. At the age of 79 she has 20 grandchildren and over 40 great-grandchildren. We don't look back on those years as bad. We have too many happy memories.

NICOLAS AND VERONIQUE FLOENER — by Jean Pellerin

Nicolas and Veronique Floener lived at Cochrane, Alberta. They raised two sons and two daughters; Josephine, Arsene, Marcel and Jean.



Nicholas Floener.

In the spring of 1919, Arsene came to Grande Prairie with Slim Hutt and Percy McFarlane after serving in the Army. He wrote back to his folks telling about the lovely country and lots of grazing land, as his dad had horses and cattle.

So in July, Nicolas came up and bought the John Parent farm which was a half section. He went back to Cochrane and in August, Nicolas and Marcel came north with the horses, etc. This took them three weeks. They brought the Model T Ford Car up with them, it was the only one here. The kids had to corderoy the slough by their place every time they used the car for transportation.

Veronique and Jean stayed in Calgary one week before coming up, it took them a week by train. One incident that took place on the way up, the engine went off the track so everyone got out and picked blueberries to eat. When the engine was ready to go there were a couple that couldn't leave the blueberries, so the engineer took off. These two had to run to catch their ride.

Veronique and Jean arrived a week before the men so they stayed at a hotel in Grande Prairie. Then later they moved in with John Parent. Josephine stayed in Calgary and worked for a doctor McLean. Arsene moved back to Calgary and worked on farms around there. Josephine moved up here in April, 1920 and

Arsene came up the following year. Arsene and Marcel liked to break horses for riding, so they had lots of exciting spills.

The first summer Nicolas, some of the neighbors including Mr. Whitfeild lost a lot of horses from water hemlock.

Josephine married Eric Anderson, April, 1921. They moved to Tofield and made their home there. They raised three children; Rae, Lina and Arley. Josephine passed away March 29, 1938 at 41 years of age.

Jean married Raymond Pellerin November 16, 1922. They lived on Ray's homestead for eight years which he took in 1914. They raised three sons; Harvey, Jimmy and Ernie. In 1930 they moved to Goodwin, where Ray got a quarter through the soldiers grant. He could homestead a quarter and Jean could file on a quarter, at that time the wives could also homestead. They lived there for eleven years and then moved back to the Floener farm in the fall of 1941.

Mrs. Floener passed away December 11, 1927 at the age of 58 years and Mr. Floener passed away March 12, 1942 at 70 years of age.

Arsene married Ellen Andress, they have no children. They moved to Detroit and worked for the Chrysler Company for years. Arsene passed away September 4, 1968 at 68 years of age. Ellen passed away one year later almost to the day.

Marcel married Elsie Fogle in July, 1930. They had three children; Phylis, Lawrence and Karen. They lived where Bobby Kimble lives now. Later they moved to Falher then to Clairmont where Marcel was the elevator agent. Later they moved to Spokane where Elsie still lives and the children are close by.

Marcel passed away April 9, 1973 at 69 years of age.

Ray and Jean did some travelling and enjoyed the outdoors. They spent a lot of time in their garden.

Ray passed away December 26, 1972 at 76.

Jean still lives in her house on the farm that son Ernie and family farm. In the winter Jean is busy doing fancy work and writing to Pen Pals. Summer is spent in the garden among her flowers. She has ten grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

FORTIER STORY — written by George and Mrs. Fortier

The year 1903 saw a young lad from Eastern Canada work his way west; Joseph Fortier working in lumber camps along the Great Lakes, logging in the Lake of the Woods area. This was the start of "Joes" journey west; West which would be home in the future.

Joe was a lad of 16 when he stepped out into the world, even at this tender age he had an apprenticeship in harness making and shoe repair under his belt that he had learned from an uncle of his in Maxwell, Ontario.

For a time he worked at logging, then on the rails arriving in Calgary. For several years Joe worked on the Egbert ranch in southern Alberta.

1906 saw Joe move back to Calgary starting to work for Riley and McCormick as harness maker.

1910 another move for Joe — this time to Viking, Alberta where he opened his own harness shop and shoe repair and spare time was taken up enjoying sports — playing baseball, lacrosse and hockey;



Mrs. Fortier, Ed, George and Jean.

hockey was his favorite. The league comprised of five teams, Viking Wainwright, Camrose and Tofield, the others I'm not sure of. Joe liked to play hockey but he used to like to fight. "Bloody Joe" the fans called him. If he got hurt or couldn't play the fans would say "no use going tonight cause Joe won't be there and there won't be a fight."

The guns of war sounded and the call to enlist saw another move, this time with the 19th Alberta Dragoons. While serving overseas he met a Scotch Lassie from Ayr, Christina Spier and at the duration of the war in 1919 they were married. Joe and Christina came to Canada journeying west to Edmonton.

Farming had been a dream so when he heard of the homestead land still available in the Peace River area they came north to Grande Prairie. Joe didn't file on land immediately but operated a light delivery service for stores in the hamlet using a democrat and two horses which used to run away about every second stop! Later on he worked for J. B. Oliver in the undertaking business. One incident he often told about, was "J.B. had a cuckoo clock in the parlor and one night Joe was preparing a body and this cuckoo clock started to cuckoo'. "Well this just about scared the wits out of me!"

Filing on a homestead and soldiers grant in 1924, Joe, Christina and by now son Ed, born in 1922, moved to their first home on S.W.¼ 9-71-5 west of the 6th in the Five Mile Creek district. This land had belonged to land agent Mr. McLean who enlisted and was killed overseas.

This was to be a new experience for a war bride, raised in the city but determination and the desire to make a home, made everything worthwhile.

They were fortunate in having a house to move into which had belonged to Ray and Bertha Craven, until their own log house and barn were built. The Cravens had gone out to work on a farm near Calgary to enable them to pay off the Soldiers Settlement Board, but tragedy struck the Craven family. The young couple had gone swimming in the Bow River and Bertha got caught in an undercurrent and drowned. Ray never

came back to his land and it was taken back by the Soldiers Settlement Board and resold. This was one quarter Joe filed on and Cecil Lawrence later purchased the other quarter.

We had close neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Evans and their three girls, Mr. and Mrs. Pellerin Sr. Many a mile Granny Pellerin walked to see her neighbours. Just west of our place lived "Hans the Norwegian". We had many happy times, Dick Evans being very musical played the violin and in later years taught Ed to play.

What would you do if you smoked and couldn't afford tobacco? Well grow the stuff of course and that's what Dad did. He grew tobacco, made a press by using an old cylinder sleeve, a screw jack as the press. Two trees about three feet apart with a pole notched between them and the jack placed beneath. A couple of inches of tobacco was placed in the cylinder a round chunk of tin, more tobacco and so on, until the cylinder was full, the jack placed on top and pressure applied and plug tobacco was in the making! Many of our neighbours par-took of the home grown tobacco. Al Barret, Mr. Card, Dick Evans, and oh, yes, we boys. Geo. and Ed used to sample the product and believe me, you had to have a good constitution to smoke, the stuff — sure was strong.

Time marches on three children in the family by now; Ed, George and Jean.

Transportation was still by horse at least most settlers hadn't got motorized yet. I remember one Sunday, the Mansfield family and ourselves took our Bennett Buggy and Harold's team of mules across the Wapiti River to pick raspberries. On our way home we passed by what is now "O'Brien Park". There was a group of young men standing there and one of them let out a "Hee Haw,whee Haw", imitating the mules. Mrs. Mansfield turned around and said, "There seems to be more Jack Asses in the park than ours!" Thus the young lad's joke had backfired on him.

Around 1950 we got our first tractor, a 22-36 McCormick Deering and that year tragedy struck our family and Ed passed away in August, 1950. Two families faced tragedies as Cecil Blimkie also passed away, both young men in their twenties.

Time passes quickly and changes have been made to all families. The Senior Fortiers sold their land to George and they moved into Grande Prairie in 1963 where they live. Joe passed away January 1976 in his 90th year. Mrs. Fortier still lives in her own house in Grande Prairie.

George continues to farm the original land today.

GEORGE FORTIER

I was born March 15, 1928 the second son of Christina and Joseph Fortier of the Five Mile Creek district. All my schooling was taken at Five Mile Creek, quitting school with a grade nine education, which seemed sufficient at the time, and I sometimes think still is.

My early years I helped dad on the farm, I guess for about 15 to be exact. Our land is marginal, that is to say not the best farming land in the country, but the value of this land, for the purpose of acreages, overshadows the best land in the country.

I really liked sports, hockey and baseball, but in those years there wasn't time or money to follow sports.

For three years I coached minor hockey in Grande Prairie, at times I wonder what kids in my time would have done if they had the opportunity the boys have today.

In 1954, I married Marj Blimkie. We adopted a boy and girl, Lorne and Erin. In 1963 we bought the home place and continued to farm until Marj's illness forced us to move to Edmonton in 1968.

Working in Edmonton for Massey Ferguson and Alberta Tractor, I earned my Heavy Duty Mechanics License.

We returned to Grande Prairie in September of 1971. In March of 1972 I commensed work with Co-op Implements as Agriculture Sales Manager. I enjoyed the job because I was working with the things I likd, farm equipment and farm people. In 1973 my wife passed away and so the necessity to stay in town was gone. I decided to return to the farm. Sometimes you would wonder why I would quit a good paying job and return to the uncertainty of farming. The fact you're independent, you are accountable to yourself on the farm, I suppose this is what prompted my return.

Thus in 1976 I started where I had left off eight years before. I married Alice Renner in July of '76. I wonder what the future holds for us, this year was one of the wettest on record; we had a windstorm on Hallowe'en night which did extensive damage to buildings and large pine trees around the building site. This winter has been the warmest on record.

The only record left to break is for Alice and I to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary with Bert and Ann Blimie in the year 2026!

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE GEORGE FORTIER

George was born March 15, 1928 with one brown eye and one blue. He wrote in his story of the many odd things that had happened in the past, and of oddities that could occur in the future. He passed away very suddenly May 25, 1977 from asphyxiation. His eyes were donated to the C.N.I.B.

His first wife, Marj, had kidney failure and could only live by being on the dialysis machine so the family moved to Edmonton, renting the farm to others.

After Marj's death George and his two children, Lorne and Erin, returned to the farm. Because George had, had so much experience with kidney problems and could run the machine, the Edmonton Branch of the Kidney Foundation urged him to start a Branch in Grande Prairie. He did and was appointed President, and with the help of volunteers and nurses was able to raise funds enough to buy a machine and equipment. For several years urinalysis tests were taken at the schools. When a child showed an abnormal condition it was reported to the parents and they were urged to take the child to the family doctor. Later it was discovered that high blood pressure checks were more effective as they did not only show problems of the kidneys, but other defects as well. At the same time he coached minor hockey and baseball as well as refereeing for the men's tournaments, all of which he had

done for years. He was also a member of the board for C.C.I.L., a farmer owned machine business.

In 1975 Alice became part of his life. In midsummer of 1976 they were married. To those of us that knew them from childhood, seeing them together was like bringing the sun from behind a cloud. They had a healthy, peaceful style of happiness. They loved life and nature, were both hard workers for themselves, the Kidney Foundation, community and neighbors.

Early in 1977 George was elected President of the Five Mile Association. This was the school where he got his education. As President, he and his committee found that the Provincial Government had funds for redevelopment of communities such as this. There was a lot of red tape and research attached to getting this money but this wasn't considered a problem by any of them. George's enthusiasm inspired the interest of people in the surrounding area. With everyone's cooperation the badly abused grounds were cleaned, worked up and seeded to grass where several ball diamonds were made. The trees were cut and burned at the back of the grounds where there is a dam which will be levelled for a picnic shelter in his memory. The poem at the end of our Five Mile story has come to life.

George and his wife Alice helped me a great deal with the Five Mile stories in this book.

It was while practising fastball on one of the diamonds at Five Mile that he was taken, doing the thing he loved to do and enjoyed. Left to mourn his passing are his loving wife Alice, Lorne, Erin, mother Fortier, sister Jean and family, and many, many friends and neighbors.

Flowers come into new bud and reach their glorious bloom, but they must pass out of our lives in the season of the frost. Yet we are richer for having seen them and enjoyed them. How much more rewarding then is the life of a loved one who leaves a heritage of living memories with us that can never die. And how truly and wisely it has been said, "God gave us memories so that we might have roses in December."

WARREN FRANTZ

Warren Frantz — Warren came to our area in the dirty 30's. In those days it wasn't unusual for someone to knock on your door and offer to do some work for a meal. He was one. He would arrive right on the spot at dinner time. Eat his meal. Go out to do his work and disappear but about once a month he would show up for a meal. In those days no one was refused a meal. He later dealt for the quarter where Pine Valley subdivision is today. He sold to Oscar Soderquist and shortly after passed away. Once he settled in the district he made up for all his meals. He was a good neighbor.

THE FLOYD GABLE FAMILY

Floyd Gable was raised in the Huallen district of the lower Beaverlodge area.

In 1951, Floyd started what was to be a long career with the oil industry. It was in Grande Prairie at a country dance, a short time later that he met his wife to be, Eva Elford. On June 4, 1954 they were wed. The couple spent their first eight years of marriage travelling to many parts of Alberta, going wherever Floyd's job took them.



Gable family.

By the fall of 1961, they had saved enough money to buy half a section of land east of Grande Prairie from Boyd Cook, formerly the bill Drynan property. In the spring of '62, Floyd and his family moved to the northwest quarter and built their first house.



Floyd Gable with an Arctic fox he trapped in his spare time in the north.

The Gable's eldest daughter, Connie was six that year and started grade one at Harry Balfour School. Kirk was four, Lorne was two, and Neil was born on July third of that year.

After Floyd got his family settled in their new home, he travelled to the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Alaska to work, often spending many months away from his family.

In 1967, Floyd and Eva purchased a quarter ection from John Swallow and then in 1969, they purchased the adjoining quarter from Horst Camplair. In the spring of 1971. Floyd put in his first crop. He returned to his job with the oil industry in the fall of that year. Floyd returned in 1974, after 23 years of service with Nabors' Drilling Ltd., to take up farming full time.

On July tenth, of 1976, Connie married Don Lobban. They made their first home in Grande Prairie. Kirk is presently employed with the plywood industry in Grande Prairie, and Lorne and Neil are continuing their education.

JOHN GARRETT

John Garrett was born in Erinsville, Ontario, July 5, 1896.

In 1912 he left for the west by train on a harvest excursion to Saskatchewan, where he worked that fall. The following spring he went to Edmonton and worked at a livery barn. He went to Edson from there and worked over the Edson Trail to the Glen Leslie district, to join his brothers Steve and Bill. He filed on homestead S.W. 14-72-4-6. He farmed with his brother Bill and during winter months he worked in sawmills south of Grande Prairie.

In 1926 he returned to Ontario where he worked in a cheese factory. In 1934 he married Bridget Doyle and they retuned to Glen Leslie. They travelled by train to Edmonton and from there came to Glen Leslie by team and buggy. They continued farming and he worked for Hystad Bros. in the winter months.

In 1938 they had a son Pat. The following year they sold their farm at Glen Leslie and bought land in the Five Mile District.

In April, 1941 Bridget passed away and from that time Alice and Bill Garrett took care of Pat. John stayed on the farm and continued working out in the winter months.

In 1954-1962 he moved toValemont, B.C., to work for Hystad Bros. sawmills.

He sold his farm in 1956 and moved to Grande Prairie where he lived until his death in November, 1974.

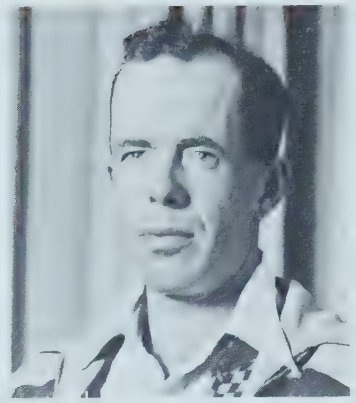
Pat Garrett lives in Grande Prairie and married Muriel Patrick in 1961. They have two children, Kevin and Karen.

OMER GOOSSENS

Born in Mere Belgium on the 7th of June, 1907, he was the youngest of a family of seven. Having a sister in Canada prompted Omer as a young man to come to Canada around 1928.

He lived with, and worked for his brother-in-law and sister (Alphonse and Marie Bayens) for several years.

Around 1937 he bought a quarter of land from Joe Davis, one from Tom Johnson and later one from



Omer Goossen.

Henry Fortier. This gave him three quarters of land. He took up residence on the Davis quarter, and farmed his land with horses. He grew mainly wheat, oats and barley.

In 1947 he sold his farm in the Peace River country and bought land at Watervalley in Southern Alberta.

He farmed up to the time of his death May 25, 1953.

BILL GRIFFITH FAMILY

Bill Griffith at the age of twenty left the Rhonda Valley in South Wales, where he had worked in the mines for eight years. In 1900 he sailed to the U.S. and again went back to mining. He then went to British Columbia and finally persuaded his parents and the rest of the family to join him. In 1912 he headed for the Peace River country with a team of oxen on a sleigh and supplies to last him for a while. Griffith homesteaded the S.W. 27-71-5-6 July 15, 1912. He then started to brush and break up his homestead. This was



Bill Griffith and wife with sons Billy and Stan, Gerri Giles (Frances' girl), Pat Pender (Margaret's girl).

done by axe and a team of oxen on a plow. He built a shack and proved up his homestead.

On November 22, 1916 he married Margaret Spiers who came from Liverpool, England.

In 1918, he traded his quarter in the Five Mile district for a quarter five miles west of town. He later bought one more quarter and here they raised their family of six, three boys and three girls. He was a good farmer and made a successful life on the farm, as farming was his business.

Though a busy farmer he found time to serve on the school board and the family was always active in community affairs.

In 1937 with the family grown and all leaving home. He still had his pioneering spirit. He finally homesteaded and proved up a quarter in the Grovedale area where they spent their last years. Of the family, Stan is assistant Fire Chief in Grande Prairie. Francis Giles also lives in Grande Prairie. Margaret Pender and her husband live at Canal Flats. Olwen Bellson at Terrace, B.C. Bill lives at Nanaimo, B.C. Ed of Teslin, Nort West Territories, Yukon.

Bill Griffith passed away March 20, 1960. His wife Margaret passed away April 7, 1972.

Gerald Hutt has the quarter he homesteaded in the Five Mile area.

THE KARL HANSON AND FAMILY — story by Thorleif Hanson

My parents, Karl and Thorine, came to North Dakota from Norway in the following years: Father in 1913 and Mother in 1915. They had three children born in Crosby, North Dakota. Gunvor, Alf and Thorleif.



This is Karl Hansons when they left North Dakota, July 14, 1927, with children, Gunoor, Alfred and Thorlief.

We left Crosby, July 15, 1927 in a 1924 Model T Ford car. We spent a week at Camrose as mother had become ill and was hospitalized. Talking about a coincidence, my mother and my wife's mother were in the same ward at the same time in the Camrose Hospital. This is where I first saw my wife (Love at first sight), she was 1½ years old then. We travelled north to Edmonton, the roads were not too good. We came to one hill and we had to back up it, because there was no fuel pump in the car and it would run out of gas, and it had to be fed by gravity.

We came to Smith and found we had to ship the car by rail because the Slave Lake area roads and railroads were flooded. We shipped the car from Smith to McClennan, then went on to Peace River. We burnt out all the bands in the transmission as the car was heavily loaded and the hills were so steep. We nearly went into the river because the ferry had already pulled away from shore and we could barely stop. We landed in Grande Prairie, August 15, 1927. We moved to the Langille place, half mile west of the Five Mile School, it was farmed by Joe Tissington, my Dad worked for him at that time. Here we attended the Five Mile Creek School. My brother, Harold, was born in the Grande Prairie Hospital, January 11, 1928. In March we moved 2½ miles south to the J. McDonald place. The Dick Evans' lived across the road. I remember having no snow until Xmas Eve, 1928. In the spring of '29 we moved again, N.E. of Clairmont, to the



Gus Swansons and Hanson at Ramsays cabin on the Wapiti in 1928.



Karl Hanson family on homestead.

Wellington School District. Here we lived until October, 1929. We then moved to Goodfare to the Eastwood Clayton place. There was no school here. This house was very cold so Alf and I were kept very busy with the wood for the stove. My sister Lilly was born here on April 3, 1930. On July 4, 1930, we moved to the homestead. We lived in a tent all summer while we built a log house. The house was chinked with moss and plastered with clay inside and out. The roof was made of poles, then a layer of willow and birch. Then there was a layer of moss and on top of it was a thick layer of sod which was laid like shingles. The windows were made from flour sacks. We had no floor so we chopped up spruce bows for our carpet. We missed about three years of school. Then the Steeprock School was built and we finished our school days here.

Our transportation the first five years was on foot in the summer and skis in the winter. Our clearing was done with axe and grub hoe. A neighbor, whom we worked for, had horses and pulled stumps with a team and broke the first seven acres we had, with a six-horse outfit.



Plowing again.

Dad worked for some people and got 12 hens, a rooster and a pair of ducks, this was the start of our farming.

Gunvor married Trond Larson Toset in June, 1934. They adopted a baby girl, Janice. Janice is married with one child and lives in Bonyville, Alberta. Trond and Gunvor have retired and live in Beaverlodge, Alberta.

In "The Hungry Thirties," Alf and I cleared a piece of land for a cow and calf, this was a start in cattle. We traded 1½ tons of hay for a three year old steer, did some more trading and got another cow, and a bull and built a log barn for another cow. By 1937 we had enough cattle and six oxen, which we used for everything you would use a horse for. We used a six-ox tandem for breaking.

Mother passed away in May, 1941 from a stroke.

Alf and I rented some land and moved on to it. We also rented Dad's place and Dad worked out at times.

Annie Moessner and I were married December 14, 1943. We had ten children: Thorine, Wilfred, Shirley, Clarence, Elaine, Dennis, Marilyn, Stanley, Norman and Leona. Thorine lost her life in a house fire in March, 1970, seven other lives were lost too; four of her children and two Weller children. She saved one son, Floyd, but lost her life when she tried to save the others. She was Mrs. Bruce Hiltz. Floyd is now staying with us. One never knows what it is like until tragedy strikes. We have eight grandchildren.

Alf married Grace Stienke in December, 1944 and farmed in the Goodfare District. They had four children: Karen, Ralph, Linda, Kristine. They have four grandchildren. Alf sold his farm and now lives at Golden, B.C.

Harold moved around a lot but is now living in Golden, B.C., with his wife, Rosella Funk. They have five children: Daune, Rickey, Laurie, Bonnie, Angelia.

Lilly marrid Joe Cripps and lives in Ontario. They adopted two children; Kim, Danny.

Dad passed away September 11, 1976 after ten years in hospital after suffering a stroke.

On the homestead we used coal oil lamps and lanterns. We got our drinking water from a spring, until they had a well drilled. Annie and I lived on the farm, N.E.¼ 28-72-12-W. 6th in the Goodfare District. We were fortunate enough to get the power about twelve years ago. Our drinking water was from a spring a ways from the house. We live by the Steeprock Creek and used the water from it for washing. Two years ago we drilled a well by the house, so no more water hauling.

ALEX HARTLEY

Alex Hartley was born August, 1911 in Elkhorn, Manitoba. He arrived in Grande Prairie, December 18, 1934 with seven dollars in his pocket. He worked on farms and at Kirby's feed mill for three years. The pay, one dollar a day. He lived on the quarter for several years, where Proctor and Gamble have their mill site now.

In 1938 he moved and started farming for himself on the S.W. 8-71-5-6. This was rented from Tom Lawlor. At present it is owned by Dorothea Mansfield. He used borrowed machinery and a horse and drill from Swallow. Oats sold for eighteen cents a bushel and the yield was ten bushels to the acre.

In 1943 he rented a half section from George Cave (who had bought this school section parcel from the government.) He kept a large number of pigs and chickens. In the eleven years he farmed this land he had only two good crops on the 200 acres which were broken at that time. Lee Johnson now owns the land.

In 1948 he bought Gus Sr. and Francis Blimkie's land, N.½ 24-71-5-6. He farmed both Caves and Blmkies until 1951. He then went into cattle and kept 150 head. Between 1960-65 cattle prices went up. Good cows and steers went as high as fifty cents a pound. After twenty years of farming with more bad years than good, Alex wondered if he would sink or swim. He decided to buy more land so he bought the Harle, Carpenter and Davis quarters and a parcel on Steve McNally's.

Alex made more money in the war years by selling wood and also shooting squirrels at ten cents each. Box of 22 shells were twenty-five cents. He remembers when new drills and plows were one hundred and fifty

dollars. He also remembers the rationing that took place during the war years. Matches were very scarce and he tells with humor how he lit an old straw butt. Evertime he wanted a cigarette he would go out to the straw butt, throw on another handful of straw and light his cigarette. "Enough to make anyone quit smoking," he says. Liquor was rationed. Alex didn't drink and had many that wanted the use of his liquor permit. Like many others Alex preferred life in the 1930's instead of the life style of today. In those days one could relax and there wasn't all the hustle and strain there is today.

Alex retired in 1973 selling a section to his nephew Jim Hartley. Jim was born in Grande Prairie and is the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Guthrie, who were very early settlers here and did so much to help develop Grande Prairie. Alex still farms the other two quarters. He is a very quiet man and a wonderful neighbor.

WILLIAM HLOSKI

Bill Hloski owned the land south of Eldoe's Trailer Court.

Hloski's land was the S.E. 19-71-5-6. He was a bachelor, always drove mules, visited all his neighbors and was very set in his ways. George and Lila Young rented his land for awhile. Lila was known for her wonderful gardens. One year her garden was doing extremely well. The potatoes had beautiful big tops. While Lila and George were away, Bill went out to take a look around the place. He noticed the big potato tops, he thought that there wouldn't be any growth under the ground with tops that large, he then took the scythe and cut the tops off. Of course Lila was very angry with him and she was within her rights. Her potatoes were only the size of marbles as the tops grew again.

The land has changed hands several times. Some people by the name of Kapuska owned it for about ten years. Mr. Kapuska passed away and she rented it to her son-in-law John Popowich. The buildings were rented out to other people as John had a farm of his own west of town. Ricky and Muriel Lawrence and family lived there for several years. Mrs. Kapuska finally sold the quarter. Marvin Jenson is the present owner.

LEANORD HUTT FAMILY — by Joyce Kimpe

Leanord Hutt was born in 1890 in Winchester, Ontario. His father passed away when he was nine and his sister, Ethel was 18. She married and went west to the Peace Country. Leaving Leanord to remain in Ontario, with his mother, until they also pulled stakes and headed west, seeking his sister and family.

His first job in the west was at Maple Creek where he was a cow hand and worked on a survery crew. He moved on to Cochrane to work again before joining the Army in Calgary. After his injury he was sent home and once again rode range for Pat Burns before venturing north to Grande Prairie in 1919 where he located and bought land in the Five mile Creek area.

He went back to Cochrane for all his necessary and treasured belongings, his horses, cows and his mother's household effects which were highly



Leneord Hutt met by mother after coming back from overseas.

treasured as they were brought all the way from Ontario. The possessions were fitted into two box cars which brought them all the way to Grande Prairie, in the late fall. He had to buy and haul feed for the livestock during the long and very cold winter.

In 1925, he helped move the Five Mile School to its new location with horses. Although he had no family he was appointed trustee because of his interest in the school and its activities. He remained a trustee until the county bussed the children to town.

In 1930 he married Ellen May Broadbridge, and built a small house in the same yard in which his mother lived in until her death, in about 1934.



In 1939 Gerald, the last member, joined the family: Lloyd, Nancy, Joyce and Gerald pose for picture on front porch.

Ellen May was born in England in 1905 and came to Toronto with the family in 1909. Later the family moved west and settled at Edmonton in 1923 where she attended high school and later graduated from the Camrose Normal School.

In 1927 she came to Grande Prairie and taught at Aspen Ridge and Hermit Lake School, (while living with her sister, Rose and Andy Madson) and at Stony Lake on the north side of the Peace River. Where she unknowingly taught Leanord's nieces and nephews. The last place she taught was at the Five Mile School.

After marrying Leanord Hutt in 1930, her first child, Lloyd, was born in 1931, and the only other time she was to teach again was as a substitute.

When Joyce was a baby, in 1933, she had to walk home each noon to feed her. Later Dora Gibson babysat Lloyd and Joyce. Two years later, in 1935, a third child, Nancy was brought into the world.

In 1937 the 1½ storey house was built by Charlie Turner. The extra room was very much needed and enjoyed whenever friends stopped over to and from town. The living room was originally the house Leanord built for his mother. She lived there alone until her death. The house stood in its original spot for 37 years until destroyed by fire in 1976.

Ellen May died in 1940 leaving her four small children, Lloyd nine, Joyce seven, Nancy six and Gerald 18 months. A housekeeper was hired for a couple of years to care for the motherless children. Then Gerald was cared for by Leanord's sister, Ethel who lived near Whitelaw.

One of the first cars in the neighborhood was owned by Leanord (Slim) Hutt. One dark night he was called upon to transport a lady patient to the hospital. On the road, however, the baby arrived in the back seat, causing him to transport two patients to the hospital.

When the Second War broke out, Leonard once again wanted to serve his country, however, he was turned away because of his young family and his serious injury of the First War. He was a life time member of the Royal Canadian Legion.

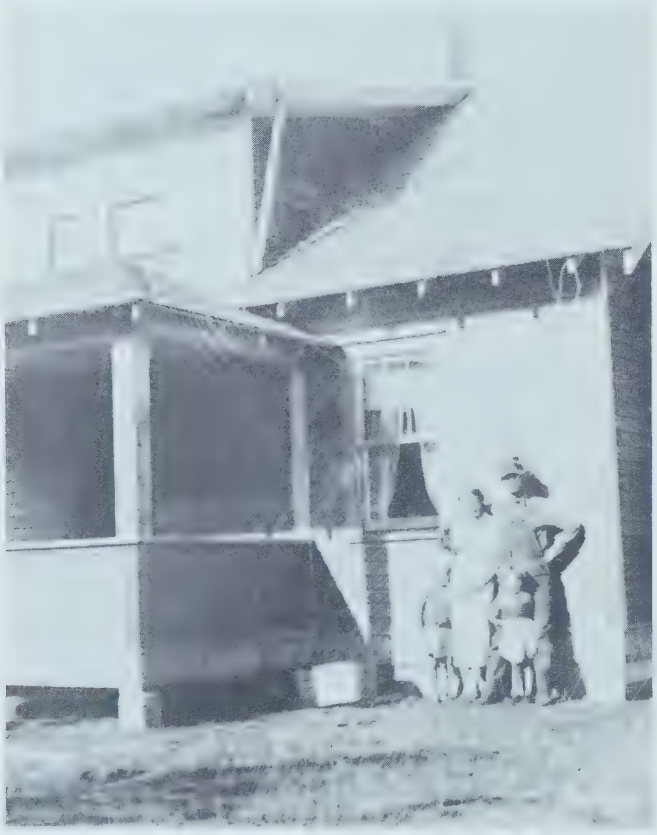
After Lloyd finished school he learned the tire business. Today he has his own tire shop in Dawson Creek where he lives with his wife Shirley, and their three children, Marilyne 16, Doug 12, and Sandy 11. Joyce sought employment at the Grande Prairie Hospital and later at Watcher's Jewellers before marrying Robert Kimpe, her next door neighbor. Now Joyce is living on their farm near Wembley with her husband and six girls; Theresa 19, Connie 16, Roberta 14, Annette 10, Arlene 7, and Denise 5.

After Nancy finished her schooling she worked at Horn and Pitfield before marrying Donald McDonald. She now lives on their Crystal Creek farm with Don her husband and her family, Alex 22, Brenda 21, Barbra 21, and Everette 19.

After Gerald went to Fairview College, he worked at several jobs throughout his life before settling down to be a truck driver. He now lives on the Hutt farm with his wife Barbara, and his three children; Sandra 9, Leanord 8, and Tracy 3.

Leanord sold his farm to Gerald in 1962 and lived there for a couple of years, until Gerald married. Then he moved into his own home in Grane Prairie where he lived until his passing in 1971.

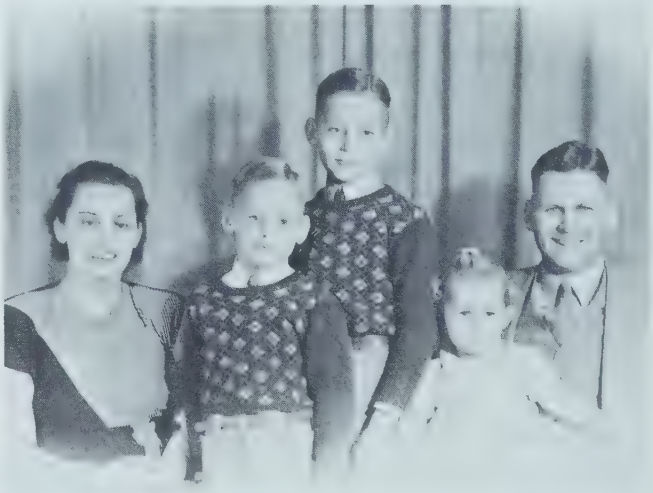
In his passing, he left his friends, family and grandchildren with their memories of yesteryear, realities of today and fantacies of tomorrow.



Ellen May, Leneord, Joyce and Nancy stand beside the newly constructed home.

THE FRED JOHNSON FAMILY — S.E. 29-71-5W. 6

Fred and Martha Johnson and their three children; Jack, Lee and Jeannine came to Grande Prairie in 1950 from Lloydminster, Saskatchewan. He and his partner Ed Hoffman set up Johnson and Hofman Lumber Supply. Fred was raised on a farm near Herbert, Saskatchewan and his wife Martha was raised on a



Fred Johnson family.

farm near Kennedy, Saskatchewan, where Martha taught school before her marriage to Fred. Fred had always loved the farm life, particularly cattle and horses. The year after he moved to this area he rented a farm on Crystal Lake. Later on he left the lumber business and bought the present farm, part of which is the old Bill Drynan place. He was very active in the community and was also very active in the Canadian Rodeo Association and was instrumental in making the Grande Prairie rodeo part of the Canadian Rodeo Circuit.

Jack moved to Edmonton after graduating from high school. He is an airline pilot and now lives in St. Albert with his wife Bunny and their three children. Jeannine also moved to Edmonton shortly after graduating from high school. She is married and lives in St. Albert with her husband Terry and their two children.

In 1962 Fred died. From then on his son Lee has run the farm with his wife Morag and their three children; Brad, Mark and Neil. Lee also teaches at the Grande Prairie Composite High School. Martha moved to Edmonton in 1971 and still resides there. Morag was raised in Stirling, Scotland and came to Grande Prairie in 1961.

HEDLEY JOHNSON FAMILY

Born on November 30, 1887, Hedley Johnson and his partner Dave Axon came from Brantford to Toronto and continued to the Grande Prairie area leaving Edmonto on October 1, 1910. Hedley homesteaded the N.E. 34-71-5-6. They came in with horses. Coming down the Athabaska hill some of their load rolled off. Among this was an old wooden rocker where a bottle of whiskey was hidden, of course everything was broken. Hedley felt worse over losing his bottle of whiskey than anything else.

In 1914 he went back to Ontario and joined the services. On June 24, 1915 he married his wife Carrie in Canterbury Kent, England.

After the war was over Hedley and his wife came back to their homestead in Five Mile. Here their children; Laura, Irene, Arthur and Wilfred were born.

The Johnson had a house fire. The neighbors worked to get the fire out as it was in the upper part of the house which was insulated with shavings. The house appeared to be safe enough to sleep in, but for safety sake they decided to spend the night in the chicken house. In the morning the house was a pile of ashes.

The Johnson family took part in all community activities. Hedley was a great man for baseball. The children went to Five Mile School for their earlier education.

In 1928 Hedley sold his farm to Alex Fisher and they moved to town. They lived in one of the two remaining houses on Richmond Avenue across from the Co-op store. He worked at many different jobs. He was hotel manager in several different hotels. He finally started working for the elevator companies and bought grain in both Grande Prairie and Clairmont.

In 1946 they moved to Rocky Mountain House and in 1955 he retired and moved to Edmonton. Carrie a hard working jovial little person passed away shortly after.

Hedley a humorous person, always with a smile on his face, must have believed in the saying, "If you see someone without a smile, give them one of yours!" Spent the last years of his life in the Veterans home in Edmonton.

He passed away February 23, 1973 at the age of 85. Laura and Irene are in B.C. Wilfred in Edmonton and Arthur's whereabouts is unknown.

TOM JOHNSON

Tom Johnson — homesteaded on the S.E. 14-71-5-6. Here he broke up some land. Built a cabin and a large barn. He was going to get married and go into dairying but his dream never materialized. Omer Goosen had his land for sometime. Art Blimkie now owns it.



Tom Johnson and his heavy oat crop.

ROBERT KIMBLE

Robert Kimble, third oldest son of Herman and Sylvira Kimble, was born and raised in the Crystal Creek area. In 1944, he married Stella Norton, and six years later bought the Marcel Floener farm, seven miles east of Grande Prairie in the Five Mile district. In order to supplement his farm income, Bob continued with his trucking business, hauling livestock, grain and lumber for the surrounding district. At that time, there was little money to be made hauling pigs and cattle. The trucker received fifty cents a head for each pig and one dollar per head of cattle to deliver the animals to the shipping yards in Grande Prairie. Also, winter months would find Bob up to his knees in snow cutting fence posts and logs for lumber sawing.

Bob and Stella have four children — Gerald, Ron, Joyce and Gene. Gerald and Ron rode to Five Mile School on horseback; but, in 1956, when Joyce started school, they were bussed to the Harry Balfour School in Grande Prairie. Gerald is married to Mae Turner of Bezanson. They are now living in Grande Prairie with their two daughters, Karla and Wendy. Ron, the se-

cond oldest son, is married to Cheryl Alstad of Lake Saskatoon. They have one son, Lane, and are presently living on the home place. The Kimble's daughter, Joyce, is married to Bill McLandress, a salesman for Pat's Auto Supply, and resides in Grande Prairie. Their two sons, Lee and DJ, take an interest in life on Grandpa's farm. Gene, the youngest son, is married to Dianne Pfau of Grande Prairie. They have twin boys, Darren and Dallas. Gene is now working at Proctor and Gamble.

At present, Bob, Gerald and Ron own and operate their own trucking business, Kimble Bros. Trucking Ltd. Jobs include hauling logs, gravel and heavy equipment.

In all, the Kimbles are a close knit family who, when time and weather permit, enjoy spending the weekend camping and fishing.

THE KIMPE FAMILY

Eleuther Kimpe was born in 1895 in Ettelgham in West Flanders, the son of Mathilda Shramme and Edward Kimpe. He went to work in his uncle's shoe shop at the age of ten. At the age of fifteen, with his shoes slung around his neck to save wear, a bottle of water and the equivalent of one dollar, he started out to make his way in the world.

After working three years in the vineyards of France, my father saved enough for passage to America. Arriving in New York in 1912 his first job was standing in ice cold water up to his armpits holding wooden piling for a steam driven pile driver. He soon abandoned this work and made his way across the U.S.A. Among other adventures, he spent some time prospecting for gold in Death Valley, Nevada. From there, he went to the Klondike where he spent two years prospecting with some success.

Culminating a fifteen year journey, my father found himself helping a market gardener in the Bonny Doon district of Edmonton. There he met and married Yvonne Demers. They were married in 1922 and began their new life operating a rented farm in South Edmonton.

With the rent going up and the price of potatoes going down, my father felt he could do better elsewhere. In the spring of 1930, with three sons; Victor, Edward and Robert, a carload of machinery and a carload of livestock, my parents arrived in Grande Prairie where they purchased land in the Five Mile district, close to an old friend, Alphonse Bayens.

The depression of the thirties was just beginning but, with a herd of milk cows and a large vegetable garden, we managed quite well. I have some vivid memories of those years. We used to visit frequently with the Bayens where my father and Alphonse would have the usual discussion about the state of the economy, the price of wheat and some fellow named Aberhart. I was always intrigued by Mr. Bayens' pipe. How he could cut the twist of home grown tobacco without cutting his fingers and tamp the fire in the pipe without burning his finger were always a wonder to me. When the pipe was lit, he would disappear behind a blue cloud while the discussion carried on.

Another memory I have of those days is driving to church on Sunday with horses. We used to pick up Mrs. Pellerin and often stopped at their place on the way home. She always had a jar of huge cookies sprinkled generously with sugar. She, also, had one of the few radios in the district which was almost as intriguing as Mr. Bayens' pipe.

The depression years, although difficult did not seriously hamper the growth of our family farm operation. With income from livestock, butter and cream, vegetables and grain, the farm grew to eight quarters.

Louis was born in 1935 and Leo in 1939. We all went to school at "Five Mile". The school still stands today, a proud patriarch of its time. It may not go down in history as a great hall of learning, but, it could claim the record for being the coldest.

The farm is now a family farm corporation since my father's death in 1961. I operate the family farm. Victor operates his own farm on land he purchased from Mr. John Blimkie. Robert has his own farm west of Grande Prairie. Louis lives in Calgary and Leo lives here on the farm. Victor is single. Our mother still lives in her own house on the farm. I married Martha Wurtz and we have one son, Gregory. Bob married Joyce Hutt and they have six daughters — Theresa, Connie, Roberta Annette, Arlene and Denise. Louis married a girl from Calgary, Marguerite McMillan, and they have one son, Brian Scott. Leo married Pat Lobert from Valhalla. They have one son, Kevin, and two daughters, Karmen and Kristine.

I am sure my mother and father would wish the Kimpe Brothers Farming Corporation to carry on. Greg and Kevin will have to make their decision. Who knows what the future will bring.

CHARLES S. KITCHEN — by Edna Hutchison

Little did my father, Charles S. Kitchen realize that when he was learning the printing trade at Quetta, India, while serving with the Imperial army in the early 1900's, he would one day be making history with the publication of the first newspaper in Grande Prairie, on Tuesday, March 25, 1913, when he went to work for the late W. C. Pratt, who established the Grande Prairie Herald.

Charles Steven Kitchen was born November 30, 1883 at Abbotsmorten, Warwickshire, England. He received his education at Stratford-on-Avon, England and at the age of 17 enlisted in the Imperial Army and served 8 years in India, one year in Ireland and 3 years on reserve in Canada.

Leaving England in March 1909 he sailed for Canada and settled in Middleport, Ontario and it was on July 31, that same year, he married Florence Louisa Larder of Strubby, Lincolnshire, England, who had come out to visit her brother William Larder and his wife and family. While living in Ontario their first child, Charles Jr. was born May 29, 1910.

Deciding to join the migration of immigrants going to Western Canada, and learning of the land being opened up for settlers in the Peace River District, dad and mother and Charles, Jr. left Ontario in February 1911 by train for Edson. That year dad walked over the Edson Trail to Grande Prairie and filed on the S.W.¼ of Sec. 5 Tp. 72 R.5 W6th M on July 17, 1911, just two days after the Land Office opened. The homestead was



Charles S. Kitchen and his wife, Florence, on their wedding day, July, 1909.

located approximately 2 miles east, 2 miles north and 1 mile east of the Grande Prairie townsite.

Returning to Edson plans were then made to bring the family to Grande Prairie. In February 1912 after getting the caboose in readiness and enough supplies for a year, they started the 250 mile trek over the Edson Trail. Among their prized possessions was a new McClary "Pandora" range which they had purchased in Ontario. In spite of the somewhat hazardous journey the stove came through in good shape and was still in use in the late 1930's.

Arriving at the homestead site they lived in the caboose until the log cabin was built. This had the usual sod roof, dirt floor and flour sack windows. Crystal Lake was just west of the homestead and among the neighbors were the Sicily's, who lived near the lake, Carveth's, Oatway's, Blinke's, Medlock's and Dave and Jack Axon, who were the closest, and others whose names are forgotten. Source of water supply was about a mile away, when they dug a well on their land.

Like so many of the early settlers, they found the trip over the Edson Trail exhausting at times and many of the long steep hills were treacherous, especially at that time of the year. This required doubling up and using roughlocks. At one particular time mother was so scared of one steep hill on the trail that she crawled down it on her hands and knees, carrying Charles Jr. on her back. Several times on the trip the caboose upset which would cause quite a delay. Reaching the Smoky River they camped under a huge pine tree. This tree was pointed out many times in later years to the younger members of the family, as they travelled the old highway on their motor trips to Edmonton.

While proving up the homestead dad was employed by J. B. Taft & Co., who had the mail contract between Edson and Grande Prairie. Dad hauled the mail between Grande Prairie and Sturgeon Lake. This meant being away from the homestead for several weeks at a time and mother would be left alone with their young son. One particularly cold winter evening, a sleigh could be heard coming and then soon a knock on the door. Mother was almost afraid to answer. When she did there was this strange looking man, all bundled up from the cold and with long whiskers from being on the trail so long. When asked if she could put him up for the night, (and not recognizing his deguised voice), said "no" as she only had the one sleeping room. However, dad burst out laughing and mother said she gave a sigh of relief, thankful that it was her husband.

On June 15, 1912 their second child was born on the homestead with Dr. Annie Higbee in attendance. It has been recorded that Edna Kitchen (Mrs. Charles Hutchison of Dawson Creek, B.C.) was the second white girl to be born in the area.

It was on one of dad's trips with the mail that mother had a frightening experience at the cabin. The chimney caught fire on a very windy day. Mother grabbed a pail of water and scrambled up the ladder on to the roof and poured the water down the tin chimney. It put out the fire alright, but what a sorry sight I was when she entered the cabin. She had left me inside in the carriage and of course being near to the chimney I was drenched with soot and water.

Mother often related to the children from time to time, how, when dad was away hauling freight and mail she would take a .22 rifle and kill prairie chicken or rabbits from the kitchen window to replenish the supply of fresh meat. Mother became quite adept at handling a gun.

In March 1913 dad stopped hauling mail and went to work for Bill Pratt. The family moved off the homestead to the townsite and lived in a tent on the west end of what is now Richmond Avenue.

In April of the following year they also took over the management of the Immigration hall which was just opened up in the old Patterson & Son Store on the corner of Richmond Ave. and 100 St., formerly occupied by John Squires as a hotel. They lived here until the new Immigration hall was opened in the east end of town in 1916. They moved to their new quarters and continued to operate the hall until 1918 when they bought a house in the northwest end of town and lived there until the new Herald building was built in 1919.

The first printing office was located where the York Hotel now stands and was housed in a lean-to attached to the post office building which later became P. J. Tooley's Real Estate office. The plant was eventually moved to a new building on Richmond Ave. about where the old Co-op store is situated. In 1915 Mr. Pratt sold the Herald to Milo and Vern Oblinger of Spirit River and my father continued working for them. This partnership was terminated in 1917 when my father purchased their share in the plant.

In those days the type for the paper was hand set,

and with only sufficient type for one page, it took six days to put the four-page five-column paper out on the streets. The press was a treadle type — there were no gasoline engines in the country and Henry Henderson, co-discoverer (with his brother William) of the Klondike, often came in to pump the press by hand.

As the town grew and business increased, dad installed additional machinery. In February 1918, his plant boasted the first Linotype, job press, and Diamond Cylinder press in the Peace River Country. That same year George Duncan purchased a half interest and they operated the paper as the Grande Prairie Herald Ltd. In the spring of 1919 they erected a two storey building on the corner of 99th Ave. and 100 St. The newspaper was housed downstairs and the upper floor was used for the I.O.O.F. Lodge, etc. At the rear of the building was living accommodation for the family.

In 1916 my brother Charles attended the first one-room school with Mrs. Matheson as his teacher. He also attended the new Montrose School built in 1917 and among the teachers he had were Mr. Foy, Mrs. Clifford, Miss Devlin and Miss McNaught, and others.

In 1930 went to work for Taylor's Ice Cream Plant, McEwen and Wilson Grocery and Saveway Grocery in 1931. He was manager of the first Scott Fruit Wholesale the same year. In 1932 he helped his father move his printing plant from Rolla to Dawson Creek. He then returned to Grande Prairie and was living there at the time a fire destroyed the Herald building in 1939.

Two more children were born to my parents in Grande Prairie, Norman, in the Immigration Hall December 19, 1917 and Beatrice in our first house in the northwest part of town, April 18, 1919, with Dr. L. J. O'Brien attending physician. Myself, Norman and Beatrice also attended Montrose school and among our teachers were Mrs. Clifford, Mrs. Dixon, Miss Morrison, Miss Hornick and Miss Blades.

Dad and son Charles became interested in radio as a hobby and spent many hours repairing radios in the area. Dad and Adrienne Lachapelle built the first one-tube radio transmitter in 1922.

It was in 1927 that my father sold his interest in the Herald to Mr. C. W. Fredericks and the family moved to the coast where they resided until 1929 when they returned to Grande Prairie. He then opened a Radio Sales and Repair Shop and was in this business for one year when he decided to go back into the printing trade. He started the first newspaper in the Peace River Block of B.C. at Rolla and the first edition appeared May 6, 1930.

My father passed away in Dawson Creek in September of 1959 and mother in November of 1961.

HARRY LAWRANCE FAMILY

Harry Lawrance was born in England in the year 1886. In 1912 he and his wife came to Canada and settled at Sedgewick, Alberta. He rented land and also worked at the Experimental Station. Being a lover of animals he always boasted about his beautiful black angus cattle which he and the boys would take to the fairs and the livestock show in Edmonton. He and his wife had three children; Alex born in 1914, Cecil, 1916 and Eva born 1919. When Eva was about two years old their mother passed away. The neighbors and his sister-in-law helped care for the children for a time.

About 1925, Bertha Gibson who had been twice widowed and had four boys and a girl came from England to help Harry care for his family, as well this gave her a home for her family. They later got married and this made a family of eight children; Len, Percy and Harry Rooksby, Dora and George Gibson, Alex, Cecil and Eva Lawrance. The older boys were able to work out. In those days one learned to work and leave school when quite young. Thus they supported themselves as well as helping provide for the family at home.



Family reunion of Lawrances in 1976. L. to R.: Harry Rooksby, Dora Blimke, George Gibson, Percy Rooksby. Sitting: Cecil Lawrance and Eva Lett. Missing are Alex Lawrance and Len Rooksby.

In 1928 they decided to come to the Peace River country where one could own his own land by homesteading. They came by train to the end of the steel which was Wembley at the time. Because there were no living accommodations in Wembley, they were forced to come back to Grande Prairie. They stayed in the Corona Hotel later moving to the Immigration Hall.

Harry first worked for Joe Davis who lived on the banks of Bear Creek. He homesteaded the land across the road from Davis' the N.W. 12-71-5-6. They built a house of logs and rough lumber below and against the first bank on the creek hill.

By this time there were only three children who were too young to go to work. Cecil started school that fall at Five Mile, George and Eva started the following spring. Eva was the last to leave school in 1936. They had four miles to walk or drive to school. Their house was small and heated by wood and light was coal oil lamps, but when a member of the family was out of work they came home until they got another job. It

wouldn't be long as in those days lots of people worked for their room and board, or wages were ten dollars a month. They hauled their water from Bear Creek.

They also had a large garden spot and sold vegetables as well as having plenty for their own use.

Entertainment consisted mostly of family and friends getting together in the winter months and playing cards and visiting. There was dancing and concerts at local schools or community halls. In the summer picnics and dances were popular. All neighbors got together for such days as wood sawing, butchering, etc. In times of sickness or death everyone pitched in and helped one another.

In 1935 they rented the Johnny McDonald quarter and brushed and broke a lot of it, later moving there. They later leased the N.E. 11-71-5-6, which was a school quarter.

In 1937 Harry took the job of weed inspector for the municipality. He had a team and Bennett Buggy and went as far north as Webster. Bertha always went with him as by this time Harry had been stricken with asthma.

They had milk cows, chickens, pigs and anything one kept on a farm. One of Harry's sons had been at home helping him for several years and continued there until 1941 when Harry decided to sell his assets and move to Calgary.



Four generations, Harry Lawrance's son, Cecil, grandson Richard, and seated, fourth generation.

Mrs. Lawrance passed away in the summer of 1946. Harry came back to Grande Prairie in the fall and spent the winter with his family. He then returned to Calgary but moved back to Grande Prairie again in 1954. He worked for oil rigs for several years as a cook. He then worked in the Murray Hotel for Jim Teeple. After Jim Teeple's death he moved to an apartment on 97th Ave., where he was happy and free to do as he wished until his passing away on July 12, 1973. Left to remember the hardships he and Bertha had over the years are; Perc Rooksby (now a widower) in Peterborough, Ontario. Len Rooksby and his wife Jackie in Calgary. Harry and Gertie Rooksby, Dora Blimkie (widowed), George Gibson, Alex and Elsie Lawrance (Elsie a war bride), Cecil and Mildred Lawrance, and Eva and Charlie Lett are of Grande Prairie as well as 25 grandchildren.

Gus Blimkie Jr., owns the original homestead, he is a grandson.

CECIL LAWRANCE FAMILY — by Mildred Lawrance

Cecil Lawrance was born at Sedgewick, June 8, 1916. In 1928 he came with his dad and family to the Five Mile District. Here he finished his education.

At the age of 15 he was working for the neighboring farmers. Wages were very poor in those days. Summer $15.00 a month, winter ten. Very often the farmer didn't have the cash to pay so one was paid by trade such as cows, horses, wagons, etc.



Cecil Lawrance family, 1969.

The day started at 6 a.m. and finished from 6-9 p.m. or later, depending on who you worked for and the season of the year. Summertime it was picking roots, brushing, breaking, haying, and threshing all done by hand and horses.

In the winter time milking and feeding cows, hauling feed and manure, then a trip to the bush for wood or posts for your employer was the usual work.

December 4, 1939 he married me, Mildred Evans, who had lived very much the same kind of life. There were no boys in our family so I was the outside worker as well as knowing how to cook, can, sew and wash clothes on the scrub board. My dad spent quite a bit of time in the hospital for a few years with various ailments. So when I got married I just changed from the herds of cows I was used to. By this time Cecil had been working at home for several years as his dad was an asthmatic.

We built a little 14 x 16 house in their yard. The material was bought at Steve Garrett's sale. The house cost us $65.00 and our best man Bob Wilson and several others in the family helped to build it. We started out with a second hand stove, table, and two chairs, a dresser which cost $5.00. We bought a new

bed for $20.00 so we had about $75.00 worth of furniture. Thirty-seven years later the dresser and chairs are still in use. The table got too small and the bed wore out. But at that time we were set up pretty classy. We stayed there two years until Dad and his wife decided to sell the assets and moved to Calgary for his health.

We took over the renting of the quarter from Johnny MacDonald. Also, had the NE. 11-71-5-6 leased from the government. We went on our own with less than $100 worth of machinery and horses to farm with. Bought two cows due to calve on credit, and lost one before she calved. We had raised two heifers of our own. So we milked three cows. Bought 18 hens. We sold our cream and milk to Hugh Kirby who at that time was milking cows in south Grande Prairie also sold the eggs.

In 1943 we bought the N.E. 16-71-5-6. We moved our little house, (which incidentally is still standing today after being moved three times) and our other assets to this quarter the second of November of that year. We continued renting the other land.

In November, 1944 we started with fluid milk, hauling the milk and helping Norman and Velma Jacques (I. V. Macklin son-in-law) who started a plant. We hauled the milk fifteen miles each way with team and sleigh or high wheeled wagon 365 days of the year. While our horses were eating and resting we helped weigh and empty the cans to take back for delivery next day. Made three dollars a day.

In April of 1946 the N.A.D.P. bought Jacques out. Being a pool we had to have a board which Cecil served on for many years. We continued hauling the milk in the winter. When the weather wasn't too bad, I would take the three children which had come along by this time and haul the milk while Cecil went to the bush for wood or posts which we sold. Many places the cans which weighed about 100-110 pounds had to be pulled from shallow wells or carried from cooling tanks in the houses. We'd be up before five in the morning. By seven o'clock we were on our way, with chores done, everyone fed and dressed. When we got home in the evening there was chores to do, cooking, washing, etc.

In the summer we brushed and broke up our land by hand and horses. Grew a large garden, vegetables went in exchange for groceries at Nelson and Archibalds. Our fruit was only wild fruit along with our own home grown raspberries and strawberries. I used to can over 500 quarts of fruit and vegetables each year. By 1951 we had a family of six; Richard born February 15, 1941, Alex April 7, 1944, Clara born 6 of May, 1946, Lyle born June 10, 1948, Darlene May 19, 1950, Garth May 28, 1951.



George and Ed Fortier breaking our land with eight horses on the breaking plow.



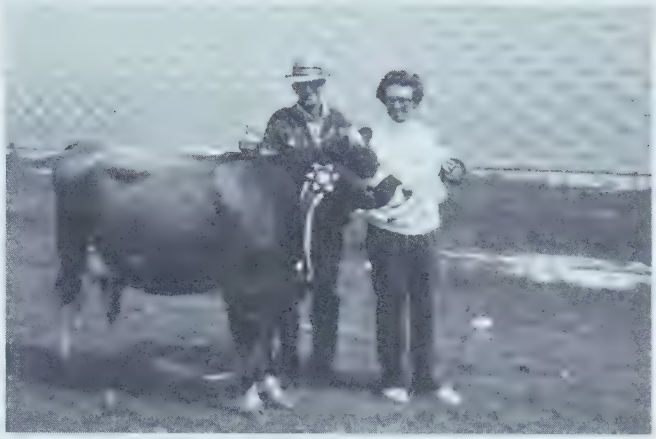
Log sawing at Fortiers.

We were a family that worked together and played together. Our children could all dance by the time they were ten years old. We all played ball together and still do at times. In 1947 Ricky started school at Five Mile, the second generation to get their education here. The others followed. Centralization took place, Darlene and Garth took all their schooling in town. I always feel they missed out on a lot of enjoyment that the rest of us had at the country school.

Even though we were very busy making a living we always had time to take in the activities going on in the district. We provided transportation for ball teams when our children were at Five Mile. When our children were in 4-H we attended all the entertainment and helped out. We still attend the local achievement days.

We eventually bought one of the quarters Ray Craven had homesteaded about 1920 in 1945 and the following year we bought the Jackum homestead. All this land had only a few acres cultivated. In 1974 we subdivided and sold the Craven quarter the S.W. 16-71-5-6. Still own the north half of 16-71-5-6. Also lease the quarter from the government which we took 38 years ago.

In 1950 Grande Prairie started the agricultural fair. We started exhibiting vegetables, flowers, house plants, horses, chickens and sheep. We won the family award several years. In 1958 the 4-H dairy club was formed. Cecil served on the board for several years. The achievement day was held on the afternoon of one of the fair days. We put in many hours working at the fairgrounds before those final days. It was all done by hammer, axe and spade. No big equipment was hired



Cecil and Mildred with one of many of their trophy winning animals.



The grandchildren helping getting ready to show their calves at the fair.



Grandson Ronnie representing his uncle Lyle's business in parade — 1975.

then. We had family in 4-H until 1969. In 1961 we bought our first registered Jerseys which were shown in the fairs at both Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie (also one year at Valleyview) until 1971. Now we only go to Grande Prairie. In 1975 we were again runners-up on the most family points. Cecil and I still take our cattle to the fair. Our grandchildren and their parents are our helpers. The thousands of ribbons and large number of trophies we have verifies our activities in the fair for 26 years.

Over the years I remember several little incidences with the children of the neighborhood who used to visit us. Gerry Mansfield, Jim and John Unger, Norman Richards and Larry Remple used to come play with our boys. One warm spring day the boys wanted to go out in the slough swimming. They did but didn't put anything on. There is a row of trees between the house and the slough but the leaves weren't out. There was some red faced boys when they realized this. Many a hockey game was played on this slough when there was no place else. Our family are all married now. Muriel and Ricky and five children live at Sexsmith. Aex and Shirley and three children at Chemainus, British Columbia. Clara and Ed Kapalka and three children, Lyle and Gloria and three children and Garth and Julie all live in the Five Mile District. Darlene and Tom Sorken and their children live at Teepee Creek. We've had a good life in the Five Mile district and hope to remain here a few years yet.

Thoughts and impression come to mind
Of childhood memories left behind
The melodies sweet of the birds that trill
As we rode our horses on Bear Creek hill
A school called Five Mile 3287
As I still drive by it, it seems like heaven
The cutter runners as they squeaked on the ice
To go back to this would be no sacrifice
Over 50 short years we've called this our home
To far away places we don't wish to roam
When Christmas was here and concerts were over
We were happy as animals turned out in the clover.
We travelled by horse, or we walked to school
No recplex, no school bus no inside pool
On Sundays we'd visit or have a picnic
So in Five Mile District we're going to stick.

AUGUST LIGONETTE

August Ligonette — was bachelor who lived on N.W. 17-71-5-6. In the early days we used to gather at his house on an occasion or two for parties. Ladies took lunch. The parties would run until quite late. The children would all be sleeping. He was a hunter. Sometime in the 50's he was found dead on Bear Creek carrying two beavers. Max Swallow bought the land. Now Floyd Gable owns and farms it.

EILEEN AND GEOFF LOCK

Bound with determination Eileen Ronksley came to the Five Mile district from Hinton trail in about 1930. She had been helping her dad on the farm in the summer and in winter they both trapped. She had two sisters Kathleen and Gladys, they had lost their mother at an early age in 1918. They were taken care of by Stan's mother until she had to leave them for a time and return to B.C., to take care of her son who was ill.



Bill Evans and Geoff Lock.

Eileen worked at Ernie Patterson's (where there was a large family) for her board and came to the Five Mile School for her remaining education. She was very active in the school, both in classes and sports. She was certainly an asset to the school.

There were two bachelors in the neighborhood, Bill Evans an Englishman, and Geoff Lock. Eileen won Geoff's heart and they got married and moved to the farm to live. She did all the things a farm woman did in those days, chores, cut wood and helped out in different areas where she could help make a dollar. She even did some hunting and trapping.

Her grandmother later came to live with her and Geoff. Bill had departed for England.

During the time Eileen and Geoff were here, the first mail was delivered to the farms and this area became R.R. No. 1. They were the first ones to deliver the mail by sleigh and heated caboose and other means in summer.

One day they came home from delivering the mail and their house had burned to the ground despite the efforts of the neighbors to save it. Eileen's first thoughts were her grandmother. She and the bird and cage were safe with a neighbor. They built a new house with the help of the neighbors, who in those days always helped one another.

Eileen was particularly fond of good light blooded horses. She could always train them to do as she wished.

The last we heard of Geoff and Eileen they were in Florida. She was working with horses as a professional harness race horse trainer.

IRVIN VICTOR MACKLIN

"For he dipped into the Future."

"Irvin Victor Macklin was born July 12, 1888 in Northumberland County. Passing his youth amidst rural seclusion, he in turn attended the district public school, and then Albert College, Belleville, for his high



I. V. Macklin, his first wife with daughter, Velma and son, Victor.

school training. At this latter place in his final year, he distinguished himself by capturing the Senate Scholarship. He came to Victoria in 1906 and at once proved himself a philosopher by his clear, logical thinking. In the hearts of his fellow students, he won a warm place by his congenial manner and upright character. "He leaves college with the brightest prospects for a prosperous and useful life".

(The above is copied from a 1910 yearbook from the Victoria University.)

After graduating with a B.A. degree, I.V., went to visit his home at Fenella, Ontario and his lady friend, Miss Nellie Coss at Montreal, whom he had met while on a trip to England several years earlier.

Then he started out for the west, with two thousand dollars in his pocket that his father had given him, and a companion Mr. J. S. Shuttleworth a druggist who also wanted to go west. They arrived in Edmonton and

hearing about the Peace River Country, they decided to head for the Peace. I.V. bought a wagon and team of horses, a tent and stove, blankets and a grub stake to do a year or more. Shuttleworth also got a horse and supplies. They left Edmonton on August 3, 1910, their route was via Athabaska, Slave Lake, Grouard, Peace River and then South to Grande Prairie some five hundred and fifty miles. They arrived here on September 20, 1910, together with several others they had joined up with on the trail.

The first winter he lived in a tent but did not consider this any great hardship.

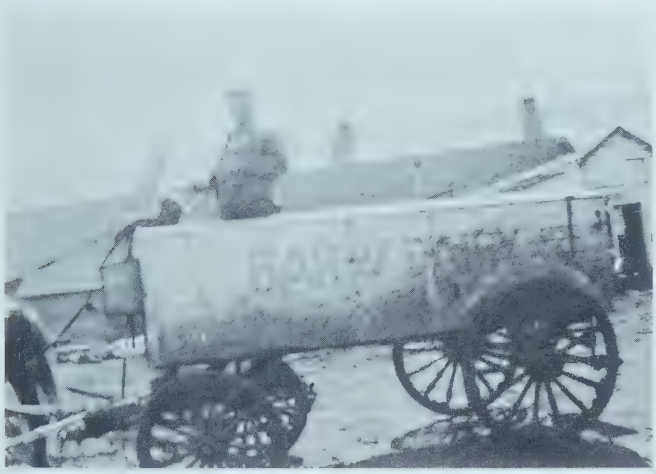
In October he filed on a homestead the S.E. 71-6-6, he also purchased the west half of 30-71-5-6. He located his farmstead near the northwest corner of the homestead.

The first week in January, 1912, he headed back to Edmonton where Nellie was now waiting for him. They were married and after acquiring further supplies they started out again for the homestead this time it was over the Edson Trail.

On November 27, 1912, I.V. and Nellie's first daughter, Velma was born, she was the third white child born here. Velma married Norman Jaques, they are now living at Wellesley, Ontario.

By January, 1913, I.V. started teaching some 13 or 14 pupils in the old Montrose School. Thus he became Grande Prairie's first school teacher but only taught until the end of June.

During this early time in Grande Prairie, I.V., served as a magistrate for a short while. All went quite well until a fairly prominent bootlegger was brought before him, the sentence he gave was that prescribed by the law. But some of the more influential citizen who were sympathetic with the bootlegger apparently had the authority to ask for I.V.'s resignation, and got it.



I. V. Macklin's last milk wagon.

By this time I.V. had also started to buy dairy cattle, and soon was to start selling milk in the town. Early in 1947 the N.A.D.P. bought I.V.'s Bar-V-Dairy business. This was the end of washing bottles, bottling milk and cream and delivering it from door to door in the town.

Then on November 17, 1917 a son Victor John was born. He received his schooling here, his university at Edmonton and Kingston, he also worked for the Federal Government. Victor married Ann Roberts, they now reside at Carp, Ontario and are retired.

Besides his farming operations which by now had expanded until he required extra help to keep the farm running, he kept a keen and active interest in community and farm affairs as well as the Provincial and Federal political situations.

In the early spring, 1940, he was the C.C.F. candidate in a Federal election. Twice more he was a C.C.F. candidate, but his election was not to be.

Very soon after on May 4, 1940 Nellie passed away. Velma and Victor were away from home and I.V. was alone with quite a large farming operation. After the fall's work was finished just before Christmas, I.V. went to visit his folks in Ontario, his first visit in 30 years.

In June, 1941, he married (Matilda) Tilly Jantz.

The Second World War was now raging and men to do farm work were hard to get. For quite some time most of the work on the farm was done by girls, and that fall nearly all the harvest crew was girls.

In September, 1942 a son Irvin Robert was born, son Arthur Wayne came the end of August, 1945. Then Shirley Ann came in May, 1947 and Linda Jane arrived in January, 1954. Arthur married Donna Hickson of Debolt and has a farm north of Debolt. Shirley Ann married (W.K.) Bill Pearson now of Kawakawa, New Zealand. Linda is still at home with her parents. Son Irvin took on the milk cows in 1968. The range cattle were all sold in the fall of 1970, it was at this time that I.V. retired from active farming operations.

In 1949 I.V. decided to rent the farm out, he had been bothered with arthritis. So the family moved to town, and lived on Main Street, right across from the Old Donald Hotel for ten years. Then in 1959 a new house was built on the half section, and back to the farm the family came.



Second family, Art, Ann, Tilly, I. V. Macklin, and Irvin with Linda in front.

Now the children are all grown up. Irvin married Bonnie June Knight, they farm and live at Kleskun Hills.

And now it is January, 1977. The old farm buildings on the homestead have been gone for some years, the land is covered by city homes now. Son Irvin is farming the half section for I.V.

I.V. is a life elder of St. Pauls United Church, he supported all the various co-operations, and farm organizations, wrote articles in farm papers as well as local papers, he had several booklets published, and gave a weekly fifteen minute talk on a local radio station for a number of years, mostly on timely topics, politics and religion. In the early years he went all over the Peace Country, organizing U.F.A. locals.

I am sure that quite a lot has been left out or forgotten.

I.V. is still getting around in his own home on his half section, and doing quite well.

HAROLD, DOROTHEA, MAVIS AND GERALD MANSFIELD

Harold was born at Stowe, Vermont, U.S.A. in July, 1898 and emigrated to Canada with his parents in 1912 settling in the Hanna, Alberta area where they engaged in mixed farming.



Dorothy Mansfield teaching the pig to fend for itself.



Mavis feeding the baby pig.

Dorothea Scott was born in Nanton, Alberta in May, 1908 and moved with her parents to a homestead some fifty miles east when she was six months old, where she lived until her marriage to Harold in November, 1935. They settled at Hanna, Alberta, where Harold was employed as a grain buyer by the Pocock Grain Co. The Company moved them north to Grande Prairie in August, 936. Harold continued buying grain until Mr. Pocock, head of the Company passed away.

He drove trucks until the purchase of the Wood Lake quarter the N.E.¼ 17-71-5 when they moved to the land and went into mixed farming. With the low prices of farm commodities what they were, no car and no roads, what a mix-up it was! In the late 1940's, they purchased the E.½ 8-71-5-W6 from a Finance Co. in Edmonton.

The Mansfields took a keen interest in the Trumpeter Swans that made Wood Lake their summer home. Their venture consisted of pigs, cattle, cream and milk, which were sold to the local creamery, graded eggs were sold to stores and private customers, hatching eggs were sold to the local hatchery.

They always produced a flock of turkeys for the Christmas market and one special order for years was a turkey cooked with all the trimmings and delivered at six o'clock on Christmas Eve.

Mavis joined the family in September, 1937 and took her education at Five Mile Creek school, riding her pony, then boarding in Grande Prairie to continue her education, graduating in June, 1955. That fall she enrolled in a Business College in Edmonton, graduating in 1956. She joined the staff at Central Mortgage and Housing in Edmonton where she was employed until her marriage to Kenneth McDonald in September, 1957. Kenneth was employed by Reading and Bates Drilling Company, a career he has followed for over twenty years. He and Mavis have been in many parts of the world during that time including Alaska, Louisiana, England, Nigeria, Singapore, Indonesia and Scotland. They have two sons, Vance and Kelly and a daughter, Valerie, who was New Year's Baby in Alaska in 1967.

Gerald was born in August, 1944 and had his early education in Five Mile Creek school, then Harry Balfour and a winter season at Fairview Agricultural College. He joined the staff at North Canadian Forest Industries (Plywood Division) where he worked for five years. It was then that he decided to fulfill his childhood ambition to be a Heavy Duty Mechanic. He apprenticed at R. Angus Alberta Limited and got his license in 1970 and has continued working at his trade, he makes his home in Grande Prairie.

One of the highlights of the Mansfield family's life was the winning of a New Ford Car in 1949 on a dollar ticket when they did not own a car. Harold's health failed and in January, 1964 he passed away. Dorothea followed a cooking career which took her to many camps in Alberta, North West Territories and as far north as Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik in the Arctic, where it takes five whiskey jacks pulling a raven, to get him started on a cold morning.

Dorothea is now retired and lives on her lake quarter, as she so fondly calls it, and enjoys the

wildlife on the lake, her greenhouse, gardening and her many friends. In 1975, she sold the N.E.¼-8 to her son-in-law and daughter, Ken and Mavis, she rents the S.E. quarter to cattlemen for pasture.

JOHN McDONALD FAMILY

Johnny was born in 1900 and before he was old enough to join the Army, he and another young lad took off to Edmonton hoping to get into the Air Force. They were waiting in a long line of volunteers, Johnny was near the end of the line, he had a terrible toothache, he knew where there was a dentist so decided to have his tooth removed while waiting, he did and went back to the volunteer line. When his turn came they found he was a very sick man, the dentist had given him a shot of cocaine and his blood pressure was extremely high. He explained to them what had happened. They told him to come back when he could prove he was well, this he did but by this time the Air Foce had all the men they needed. The recruiting officer told him he could join the Army, he didn't want to do this, his ambition was to be a pilot, so he had to wait his turn. By the time his turn came the war was over, he never became a pilot.

In 1926 he married Sylvia Fogle who worked as a tray girl at the hospital. (They would now be called Ward aides). They were married in town and went back to the farm for a picnic which was all the celebration they planned. After they were comfortably bedded down for the night the neighbors showed up about eleven o'clock and chivareed them.

In 1926 Johnny started working for the Immigration Department, they moved to town. They lived in the building which is now used for apartments east of the Co-op Store. They worked there for twelve years. During this time, Johnny started up a moss camp across Bear Creek in the swamps directly south of the present



John and Sylvia cutting the cake at their 50th anniversary celebration. Sylvia's 93 year old mother sitting.



Sylvia McDonald's family, the Fogles.

Pine Valley Subdivision. This moss was made into insulation for buildings.

Johnny was active in getting minor hockey started in Grande Prairie. The boys played without uniforms for a number of years until some of the clubs furnished the boys with uniforms.

About 1938 he took a job with Frontier Lumber Co. (Now Beaver) and remained there until his retirement. The MacDonalds have two children. Lyla Mae and her husband and children live on a farm near Valleyview. Ivan and his wife and children live in Edmonton. Johnny and Sylvia celebrated their 50th Anniversary in June, 1976 in the Elks hall with many old friends and neighbors attending.

They are lifetime members of the Rotary Club. Both are active in the senior citizens group and they also travel quite a bit.

ROBERT McDONALD FAMILY

Robert and Bella McDonald and their three children; Johnny, Gordon and Kathryn came to the Peace River country in 1911. Bob filed on a homestead at Beaverlodge. They soon decided they didn't like the area. They moved to Grande Prairie. The family living in the Bredin building for two years. This was a stopping place for all the early settlers. In 1912 Bob filed on the S.E. 8-71-5-6.

In 1911 the Grande Prairie school district was organized and a school was built in 1912. John is the only survivor of the first class that went the first week, as Gordon was sick at home. I. V. Macklin was the teacher.

In those days the Department of Education required that in order to keep a school open in a hamlet, they must have an enrollment of 14. Grande Prairie had got down to 10. There were a lot of Indian children around Flying Shot Lake, that weren't going to school, the priest went out to their homes and talked some of the parents into sending their children to school, which



Bella McDonald enjoying herself with friends, L. to R.: Dorothy Richards, George Young, Bella (Mrs. Bob McDonald), Lila Young.

some did. The white children rebelled against them, they only stayed half a day and didn't return but school went on.

The MacDonald family then moved to their homestead to start farming. Clearing land, growing crops and gardens. Bella also helped deliver several babies in the area.

There were many fires in those days. The MacDonald's were not excluded. One morning after they had milked the cows and done the chores, they found their house had burned to the ground with all their household possessions. The boys worked away from home at times, but also took up land. John filed on the S.E. 15-71-5-6. Gordon owned the N.E. 7-71-5-6.

Sister (Kathryn) Marvel as she was known as then, was a horse lover and until the time she was old enough to go to work spent many hours with her pony. She was always good with the younger children of the area. When you rode with Marvel you really hung on, her horse was very fast, she never wasted its energy. Kathryn married Russell Stewart of Grande Pairie, raised two girls and one boy and passed away from a heart condition, when not too old.

Gordon married a girl from British Columbia. They farmed their land here for a number of years. Gordon and Lucy now live in British Columbia.

STEVE McNALLY FAMILY

Born in 1923 in the Lockwood-Drake district of Saskatchewan, Steve the third child of Mary and Peter McNally came with his parents to the Grande Prairie area in April, 1929.

We stayed in the Immigration Hall for a short time, later moving to Hans (The Norwegian's) land which was situated south and east of Grande Prairie. There was someone living in the shack, so we lived in a hay rack, which was turned upside down, and covered with canvas. We later rented the S.E. 15-71-5-6 from Johnny McDonald and moved into the log shack on the quarter.

Sister Dorothy went to Five Mile school, but it was too crowded and Steve was unable to attend. As small



Stephen McNally, Delbert, Nova Scotia.

as he was they were unable to make room for him. Dad homesteaded in the Lindsay district, four miles north and two miles east of Bezanson. We moved with a team, which we borrowed from Bill Whitfield.

I attended the Lindsay school for a couple of years, then Fitzsimmons school was built in 1933. I finished my education there when I took my grade seven.

In July of 1937 I came to work for Tom Warden, a bachelor, for very little pay. I was paid in the fall after he sold his grain. He always had lots of eggs but didn't bake bread too often, so I had to bake biscuits every day. I went back home for awhile. Then I went and split a large pile of wood for Tuttle Graham for five dollars. I then came back to Tom Warden's to help him put in the crop. My pay this time was the use of his horses and equipment to put the crop in and take it off on the Henry Fortier place which I had rented. I put



Hauling logs at Charlie Moon's mill.

two crops in and then joined the Army. The last crop (which I had seeded in the spring beore I left) cost me more than the crop was worth, so I owed money for the harvesting of it. I had enlisted in the Army in Grande Prairie in May, went to Edmonton in June, where I saw my first $20 bill. From here I went to Calgary and then to Dibert, Nova Scotia and on to New Brunswick. George Gibson joined the same time I did. We had two leaves to come home from there. Then we went overseas to England to train.After training in England we were sent to France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. The war ended in May, 1945, George came home right away, but I stayed until almost Christmas. I had Christmas on the boat and arrived in Calgary shortly after, then arrived back in Grande Prairie in February, 1946.

I then went to work at Charlie Moon's sawmill north of Clarkson Valley, hauling logs.

I married Edna Viola Wurtz, daughter of Katie and Andrew Wurtz, who originally came from a Mennonite Colony in Saskatchewan on November 26, 1949. Edna had taken her education at the Five Mile school. We have three children; Herbert Andrew, Steven Bruce and Kathy Ann.

After working in logging camps, and for large farmers we bought land five miles east of Grande Prairie. Financing was very tough so we were faced with a foreclosure. We managed to get enough money together to maintain 40 acres of the quarter which we still own.

Herb married Karen Campbell from B.C. They reside in the Five Mile district. Bruce and Kathy still live with us.

The Imperial planer mill started in 1958, so I worked there and do a bit of hobby farming.

CHESTER MILLER FAMILY — by Delia Miller

My mother and father the Obenlocks came to Holdfast, Saskatchewan from Michen south of Odessa, Russia in 1911. We stayed there for one year, helping with harvest to pay off our debts. In 1912 we moved to Edmonton and worked to get enough money to buy a team of bulls and sleigh. I worked at the Snowflake Laundry. My sister Katie who married Billy Bayens also worked there, I made six dollars a week, Katie got seven. My dad worked for the City of Edmonton and in 1914 started for the Peace River country taking five weeks to reach Waterhole as we came the long way round via Athabaska and Slave Lake. The roads were tough, we had to break trail most of the way. When we left Edmonton they told us that this north country was full of Indians. There was a chance of us being scalped or even killed but that didn't stop us. At Grouard I set a sponge on a Saturday night to bake bread the next day. I put a tight lid on the jam pail and sat it on the stove to heat some water. Frank Doll (who was our teamster) was fixing his bed on the floor. We were busy talking, the lid blew off and hit Frank on the neck. He couldn't talk very good English but could sure swear. His favorite was God dern suna — he was so sure the Indians were after us right then. Anyway it was very cold and I set the sponge. To keep it warm we took it to bed with us. This really kept it warm. When we woke up it had run all over us and the bed clothes so we had one sweet mess to clean up. As well the Indians had a Pow-wow that night which added anguish and fear to our other problems. The next morning we moved on to Peace River. The hills were getting quite bare so we had to double up on our outfits to make the trip up the hills. We finally got to Waterhole where dad homesteaded.

He had to break ten acres a year for three years to get his title. I, Delia worked for some people by the name of Sam French, Mrs. French was sickly and couldn't do the work alone, I worked there three weeks. My pay was two setting hens with eggs to hatch. In the fall I helped them for another three weeks, my pay this time was two little pigs. But we were always glad to help out at home and get a start on the homestead.

Everyone helped one another building homes and barns. Dad did a lot of butchering for the neighbors so it didn't cost us much for meat. We did our own work on the farm, made our own butter and soap. Our curtains and underwear were made from flour sacks. Our mattresses were made from straw covered by ticking. It all worked out until we could afford something better.

In 1915 Katie came to Grande Prairie to cook for Mike Cocklin in the restaurant. I followed in 1916 and worked there too. The big stampede was on that year. It rained for a whole week. People came from all over the Peace River Block. Fred Sauls brought their chickens and cows so they wouldn't have to go home to care for them. What a let down for everyone who came. I was then working for Billy Salmon in the Ice Cream Parlour. The place leaked and rain came through the windows. We had some boxes of chocolates on display in the window, you can imagine what those windows looked like. People stayed in town and made the best of it. We danced every night above the printing office. Milo and Vern Oblinger and George Duncan owned it at the time.

In 1917 I worked for Mrs. Joe Crummy for three months. In 1918 when the flu broke out I helped in the Immigration hall looking after the sick. Then I took sick and went home. When I got feeling better I helped Dr. Featherstone at Bluesky.

In 1918 I came back to Grande Prairie and worked in the Post Office. I also met Chester Miller that same year. He had just got back from the war. We got married in 1920 and homesteaded the S.W. 17-71-5-6 across from Al King's place. We spent our honeymoon getting out wood on Al Kings for the winter.

We proved up our quarter. Chester didn't want to farm so we sold to Jack Thompson for $500. Chester started a taxi service in Grande Prairie.

We had nine children, eight living, five boys and four girls. Lloyd is living in Don Mills, Ontario, Jim and Don are in Edmonton, Bob at Port Alberni, B.C., Dale in Grande Prairie, Eilien (Mrs. Don Bruce) in Whitehorse, Joan (Mrs. Fred Smith) in Delta, B.C., Margaret (Mrs. John Baril) in Edmonton. Shirley passed away at age eleven in 1949.

Chester passed away in January, 1969. Chester was in the First World War, Lloyd and Bob in the Second.

I have a great family and am proud of them. we should thank God that Canada is a peaceful country to live in compared to other parts of the world.

HOWARD J. MILLER — by John Miller

Howard J. Miller was born in South Bend, Indiana on January 4, 1889. In 1910 he came to Canada and came as far as Edson where he got work with Doug McFarlane's survey party as an axe man. He worked his way up to the Grande Prairie area in the next two years. In 1914 he filed on a homestead to the east of Grande Prairie.

Being sports-minded he joined a ball team, travelling the country playing against other teams. Howard was an adept man and could throw a ball with all the power that can be put on a ball from either side.

Businesses going at this time were Crummy Bros. Hotel, Newspaper owned by O'Blinger Bros. and Duncan, Alex Wishart dray, Charles Stredulinsky tailor shop, Guthrie confectionary, Herman Ellert harness shop, Harry Watchers jewellery, Abe Smith second hand store, Shuttleworth druggist, Bill and Malcolm Campbell ice and water (Abe Smith later joined them), Frank MacDonald meat.



Mr. and Mrs. Howard Miller, Sept. 23, 1919.

In 1914 war broke out and Howard joined the 78 Brigade Battery returning to Grande Prairie in 1919. During the winter of 1918-1919 a bad flu broke out and caused grief to many families. Jimmy Oliver had not yet returned from the war so Frank Donald took over as undertaker. Some of the people were buried on a little hill just south from today's golf course. Others were buried at mission sight. The hospital was full so the Immigration Hall which was built in 1917 was used. It still stands east of the Co-op store.

When Howard returned in 1919 he was married to a young lady named Peggy McLain. He took her back to Indiana to meet his family. After a short time there, he and his bride returned to his homestead. He then took the job of being town police. Later he joined the Alberta Government forestry as a ranger. His area was south of the Wapiti River, Debolt and Sturgeon Lake. Later he worked in the office in Grande Prairie until the government made some changes, he was let go. Like many others in the area the Millers had their house burn down and had to rebuild. When the ARR came in the house had to be moved.

After being released from the government the depression set in. Then people started living off the land. Howard was a good hunter so there was lots of meat and vegetables. By this time he had four children to support.

During the 1930's he got badly hurt on horseback and for several years was unable to work. Therefore he rented his land out. The crops were poor but brought in some money, but not enough to pay the taxes which soon accumulated to the point where there was not much hope of keeping the farm. In the winter time he went out and worked with the axe, brushing road allowances, cut and sold wood, and trapped. In the fall he stooked and threshed for wages, enabling him to pay his taxes and maintain the home.

After the Second World War was started he got severely injured and spent a lot of time in a hospital in Edmonton. Now it was up to the family to support themselves, which meant that those that didn't have to go to school went to work. The two older boys joined the Army, their wages going to bail the farm out of debt. After all his hospital trips and operations he got a small pension. With the youngest boy to help at home, things improved and he was able to feel at ease and gradually got the taxes paid off. They farmed the land themselves again.

After the war each member of the family went his own way and worked for himself. After a few years Howard moved to town, then took a trip back to Indiana. Shortly after he took a stroke from which he never recovered, he passed away in the early 1960's and was buried in the Veteran's plot in Grande Prairie.

His wife carried on by herself for a few years. She made several trips back home to Scotland to see her relatives there. She then married an old friend Ed Crerar who was a widower for a good many years, this made life more comfortable for both of them. She always enjoyed good health until she got sick in May, 1975 and passed away.

HENRY MORGAN AND JOHN PARENT

Henry Morgan, John Parent — John Parent homesteaded on the S.W. 26-71-5-6. Anna and Henry Morgan homesteaded on N.E. 23-7-5-6. For years there was a sawmill on the Morgan place operated by John Parent where you could buy lumber or take logs there to be sawed. Herb Blimkie's bought the Morgan quarter and have lived there for years. This year the quarter was subdvided and a trailer court will be built on 80 acres of it sometime in the future.

HENRY NEWTON — by Mildred Lawrance

Henry "Shorty" Newton — Henry homesteaded on the N.W. 10-71-5-6 and his brother (who didn't stay in the area too long) homesteaded the S.W. 10. "Shorty" was a great horseman and it was one of his horses that I rode for the first time that was a pacer. His and our buildings were situated such that we could see one anothers houses. Dad noticed Shorty hadn't been out around for a few days so went to see. Shorty was a

pretty sick man as he had taken colic medicine for a cold instead of red linament. He lost his barn and some livestock with a fire. He sold the half section to a fellow by the name of McDougall. Later it was sold to Ben Kimpe and is now farmed by Kimpe Bros. Corp. He lived with the Baoker family at Rio Grand from 1930 to about 1940. He joined the Reserves in Second World War and went overseas. It was while overseas he met a woman from Australia. They later met again in Vancouver and were married. He worked at a government building for years. Was in a car accident and never recovered. That would be possibly 12 years ago.

THOMAS NEWTON FAMILY

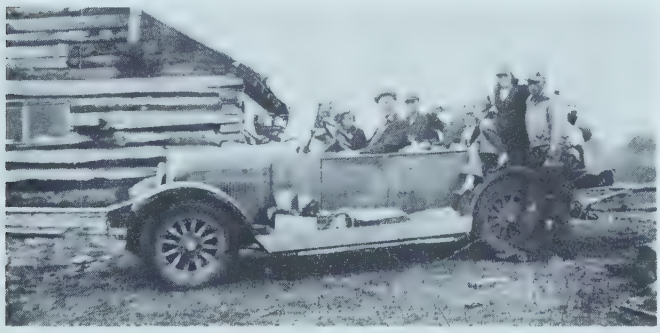
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Newton (Tom a brother of Henry "Shorty" Newton) homesteaded the E.½ 15-71-5-6. They built a big two storey house, which had many windows, they also built a large barn. Tom kept a lot of horses but didn't do much farming himself. He worked for the Department of Lands and Forests as timber inspector. They had two children Dorothy born in 1919 and Harry born later. In the late 1920's he left the farm and built a big house which later was used for senior citizens, where the new lodge is now east of 96th street. He then worked out of the office in Grande Prairie.

Tom bought up other homesteader's land and at one time he owned eighteen quarters. He rented the land out and owned the Graham Clark quarter S.E.-16 and the Charlie Joackman N.W. 16 in this area. He had many renters of his land who lived in the big house which he had built. The Fogle family (later moved to Teepee Creek, the Lemky family, who later bought land in Crystal Creek district, the Wurtz family, Waldner family, Robertson family, Spence family, and Horst Camplair farmed it for a good many years. Guy Lefferson rented it for several years before moving to the Wapiti.

In the early 40's he sold three quarters, his homestead and the Clark quarter to Ben Kimpe. Charlie Joackum's quarter was bought by Cecil Lawrance. By the late 40's they had sold all their land and their house in town and moved to Victoria. They both passed away there.

HOWARD O'BRIEN — by Ethel

We came to Grande Prairie on the train in 1920, it came in once a week.



Howard and Ethel O'Brien and family leaving Peace River country in 1939 in 1924 Dodge car.



Howard O'Brien and Jimmy Slaughter's on the bridge on Bear Creek in Grande Prairie.



Charlie and Buster Carpenter, Ethel and Maxine O'Brien cleaning cranberries, 1930.

Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter and six children (this is the Ethel O'Brien family) arrived at Grande Prairie the same time the Howard O'Brien family did. Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter are both buried at Grande Prairie.

Howard O'Brien and family homesteaded on Bear Creek, east of Grande Prairie. They had five children. They attended the Five Mile School.

The family left Grande Prairie in 1939. The oldest daughter married Emory Parrish of Bezanson. She later moved to Griscone close to Prince George.

THE PANDACHUCKS — by Elie Pandachuck

Nicolas and Eugenia Pandachuck and family of Avonhunst, Saskatchewan, arrived in Grande Prairie one cold January day in 1927, complete with two boxcars of household effects, machinery and livestock. We stayed at the old Immigration Hall until we found a house to move into. Jean was born soon after.

During our stay in Grande Prairie the Winter Carnival was staged. We enjoyed the dog races, horse and cutter races, skiing behind saddle horses, all being staged on the main street. Then there was the big ski jump on the Creek banks.

In the spring we moved to the Wylie Sawyer Farm in Five Mile Creek district and farmed there for a short while. John, Walter and I attended school there.

A couple of years later we moved to Elmworth where father had taken a homestead. This time the move was made by horse and wagon. Nora was born after we moved here.

Father passed away in 1930. Mother and we boys struggled on during the "Dirty Thirties" until she passed away in 1952.

Alex and his wife took over the farm and still live there. George, Walter and myself still farm in the Elmworth district. Evelyn also lives here. John moved to Barrhead recently. Eugene and Nora both live in Edmonton. Jean at Ft. Nelson and Jim in Ontario. Albert Popesco, by Mother's first marriage farms here. Betty lives in Dawson Creek and Nick in Calgary.

JACK AND VIOLET PATTERSON — written by Jack

I was born in 1917 on the land now occupied by Coachman Village, the S.W. 13-71-6-6, which was originally my fathers (J. O.'s) homestead. Later we moved to the S.W.¼ 13-71-6-6 grandfather's (Alphaeus Patterson) homestead and our present home. I can well remember father's milk cows being watered at Bear Creek in an ice trough, where I used to catch minnows for the cats and carry them to the barn in my pockets. At that time we sold milk to the Royal Cafe and door to door for 10 cents a quart in summer and eight quarts for a dollar in the winter. After renting the farm to Roy Macklin in 1924 we moved to town for three years. We moved back to the farm in 1927 and started a new herd which eventually grew to about 150 head.

In 1929 Mr. Sheridan drilled our present well to a depth of 247 feet, at one dollar a foot. Myself, along with my brother Ben, (who passed away in 1956) and my sister Mary, now living in Toronto, received our education at the Montrose school which was torn down a few years ago.

Times were tough in our teenage years. Once a week we were given 50 cents for a show, we had enough left for pie and coffee after.

In the hungry thirties, I worked on the road a few months each summer with Ray Lott, building roads with four horses and a frezno, pay was 90 cents an hour, fed yourself and your horses. Other summers, we hauled lumber on wagons from T. E. Cook's mill at Plums Crossing, (now the water treatment plant) for one dollar and 50 cents a month and took our pay in lumber for 15 dollars a thousand. Wood had to be hauled for the stoves, and ice cut, hauled and packed in ice houses for home use.

In 1942 I joined the Army, but due to bad hearing had to remain in Canada. Ben and wife continued on the farm after father and mother moved to town, milking cows and selling cream, later selling milk for four dollars and 50 cents a hundred. Upon my return from the Army, Tom Tate and I cut logs with a cross cut saw for ten cents a log, then I started driving "Cat" for Hales H. Ross of Grande Prairie Lumber in winter and working for J. E. Thompson on his cattle ranch in the summer.

After Ben's death, I returned to the farm and married Ben's widow, Violet. We purchased a quarter of land through the V.L.A. to the east of us, the S.E.¼ 13-71-6-6, which was the homestead of Bill Campbell, the town water man. Also the N.W.¼ 7-5-W6, owned at that time by D. W. Patterson, who was no relative of ours.

The Alberta Resources Railways have purchased a portion of both these quarters on their path to Grande Cache.

The family have all received their education in Grande Prairie. George born in 1941 is married and lives in Courtney on Vancouver Island. George is a heavy duty truck driver. Alice Perra born in 1943 is in town with her three children, she is an A.G.T. employee. Walter born in 1945 married Audrey Rotar of Clairmont, has four children and resides on the home quarter. Walter owns a cattle truck. Robert was born 1947, married Ruth of Edmonton, has two daughters and resides on the N.E.¼ 7-6-W6, (which was Delmer Pratt's homestead). Robert works for D. & B. Alex was born in 1949, single and lives on the N.W.¼ 7-5-W6 and is an employee of A.G.T.

BAXTER DAVIS (B. D.) PATTERSON — by Wauneita Ogden (granddaughter)

B.D. was born in the U.S.A. in 1859 and he married Julia Funderburk, who was also born in the U.S. in the same year. They were married in 1882 and lived in Sullivan, Illinois. Six children blessed their home and they were Art, born in 1883; Rex, born in 1884; Guy, born in 1887; Mabel, born in 1891; Victor, born in 1889; and Ernie, born in 1901. In 1896 they moved to Clarke County, Iowa. When Ernest was 16 days old his mother died.

Two years later B.D. married Dora Gleasley (a widow with three children). They had three boys; Willis, John and Ed. Dora died in 1929, once more B.D. was left with a family to bring up alone.

In 1915 B.D. made a trip up to the Glen Leslie area to visit his brother, Oliver, who had come and settled in the Glen Leslie area in 1914. B.D. was so enthused about the country that he filed on a quarter section of land, the (S.E. 3-72-3-W6) for himself and the other three quarters of the section for his oldest three sons, by proxy. He then returned to Iowa and the next year (1916) early in the spring he and five of his boys came up to Glen Leslie. Art, Guy and Rex were married, and their families followed in a month by train. The men

had trekked in from High Prairie with their wagon loads of machinery and household goods. The three boys then signed for their lease and started their homestead days. In a few months Art gave up his homestead and moved his family (wife and five children) back to Iowa to live.

B.D. made many trips back and forth from Alberta to Iowa. He bought land in the Five Mile and Twilight districts and had some of his family farm the land at different times. B.D. would spend the summers here and the winters in Iowa and in the spring of 1946, he died, and is buried in Iowa.

WILLIS PATTERSON — by Wauneita Ogden

Willis was one of B. D. Patterson's three boys from his second family. Baxter married Dora Beasley, a widow with three children, in Iowa in 1903, they had three boys of their own. Willis' brothers were Ed and John, they lived in Iowa, U.S.A.

In the spring of 1928 Willis and wife Willa (Busick) and baby boys, Max and John came up to the Grande Prairie area. They brought a carload of furniture and machinery to make a home and start farming. They were going to buy Guy Patterson's (half-brother) homestead. They moved their belongings there, then Willis' father bought a half section of land four miles east of Grande Prairie the (E.½ 28-71-5-W6th) in the Five Mile district, right beside the school, and they moved there. They lived in a couple of granaries for a house until B.D. bought an old Nurses Home from Grande Prairie and moved it out to the farm. They lived there until 1930 then moved to the Axon place, also owned by B.D., for one year then moved back beside the school for three more years. They had a sale and moved back to Iowa in 1934 and later moved to California. When they left here they had six children — two boys, Max and Keith, and four girls; Maxine, Lucille, Jean and Geraldine.

NAPOLEON PELLERIN

Carpenter by trade, Napoleon Pellerin with his wife and son Raymond Edward migrated from Missouri to the Grande Prairie district in the late winter of 1914, filing on land four miles east of Grande Prairie, between father and son acquiring the S.W. and S.E. 22-71-5-W6 respectively.



Napoleon Pellerin's house one mile south of Five Mile school. L. to R.: Nicholas Floener, Veronique Floener, Lucy Pellerin, Miss Lamb, Napoleon Pellerin, Marcel Floener.

The elder Pellerin combined farming with the building trade and constructed many houses in Grande Prairie and district throughout his active years.

He passed away in 1937 at the age of 84. His widow moved into Grande Prairie and died there in 1956.

I can remember when we were small children and we had Christmas programs at Five Mile. There was always a present on the tree for every child from "Grandma" and "Grandpa Pellerin" as we all called them. Napoleon was always Santa Claus. We were all firm believers in Santa until 1929. Several of us recognized his neck and chin as he had a new mask on. Until this time we always pictured Santa as he appeared at our concerts, as that was the only time we saw one. But after 1929, we didn't have to be told there was no Santa! I also remember when he was building a barn for Joe Tissington. He had fallen off the top hip. As we were coming from school, they were taking him on a stretcher and we thought he was dead. He was always very crippled after that. I'm adding my memories of this fine couple as a tribute to them for all they did for everyone and anyone in the Five Mile district. — Mildred Lawrance.

RAYMOND PELLERIN

Raymond Pellerin was born January 9, 1896 at Rolette, North Dakota, U.S.A. The only child of Napoleon and Lucy Pellerin.

Early in World War One, he was eager to enlist. In the spring of 1915 with a friend, he constructed a raft



Jean with sons Harvey, James and Ernie Pellerin.

to float them down the Big Smoky River to Pruden's Crossing from which point they would continue on to Edmonton. Before the voyage was finished they encountered rapids and upset, losing their grub box and blankets. Swimming ashore, they struck out on foot and met James B. Oliver and his dog on the Edson Trail. Oliver, who was carrying a large sum of money, was relieved when the strangers only asked him for cigarettes. When they explained the accident to their raft, he gave them enough food to last to the next stopping place.



Pellerin threshing in 1938, separator driven by Model A Ford.

Ray saw overseas action for four years, was wounded in the Battle of Vimy Ridge and returned to his farm in the Five Mile Creek district in 1919.

That year Jean Floener came to this district with her parents from Cochrane, Alberta and by November 16, 1922 the young couple were married.

Taking advantage of the Veterans' Grant, in 1930, Mr. and Mrs. Pellerin acquired land in the Goodwin district where the family farmed until 1941 when they moved to Grande Prairie.



Ray and Jean Pellerin — 50th wedding anniversary, Nov. 16, 1972.

They were back among old neighbours and with friends who came from Grande Prairie and other districts to join with sons Harvey and Ernest and their families at the Crystal Creek Hall in celebration of the Ray Pellerin's fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1972.

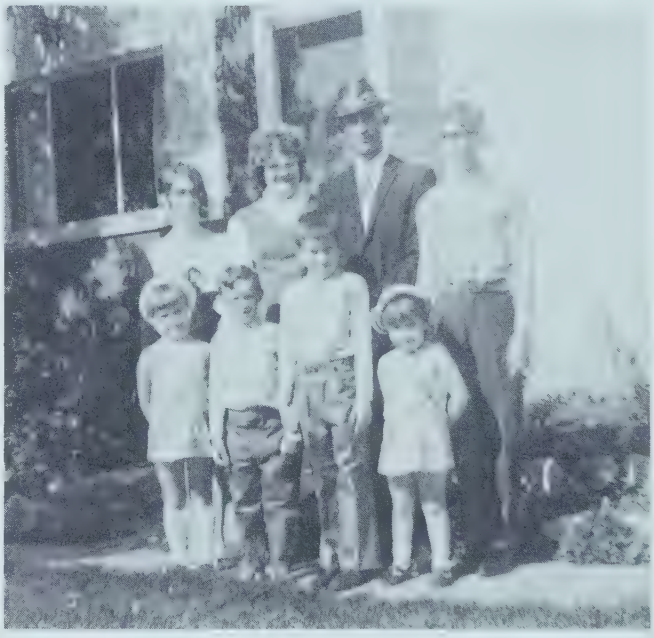
Mr. Pellerin passed away before the end of that year, predeceased by their son James, who died in 1948. Mrs. Pellerin still lives on the farm.

ERNEST PELLERIN FAMILY

Ernest Wallace Pellerin, youngest of three sons of Raymond and Jean Pellerin, farming in the Five Mile Creek district, was born in Grande Prairie on September 15, 1928. I moved with my parents and brothers to homestead in North Goodwin in 1930, where I lived the first part of my childhood in the bush land where transportation was by horse or afoot.

In the first years the only neighbours were some trappers and the only other children were five miles away, which was a long way by horseback or team, so the visits were few and far between.

My brothers and I learned to trap, and received the first few years of our education by correspondence as the nearest school was over ten miles away. Many fond memories remain of those early childhood days on the homestead.



Ernie Pellerin family taken Aug. 30, 1969.

In September, 1941, my Mother, older brother Jimmy, and I moved back to Five Mile Creek to stay with Grandpa Floener and resume our schooling in the Five Mile School, this was a new experience as I had never been to school before. The trip down that night will never be forgotten as 1941 was a very wet fall and the roads were a virtual bog, as there was no gravel in those days. We were to get a ride with the mail truck which turned out to a high wheeled wagon pulled by a Fordson tractor. That trip from Goodwin to Five

Mile, about 22 miles took about 10 hours. We arrived about 4:00 a.m. My dad followed later that winter, and my eldest brother Harvey, the next summer.

Grandpa Floener passed away in the spring of 1942. Dad and we boys took over the farming. That fall Harvey joined the Army, returning after the war in April, 1947, married Elsie Kopp of Wembley and took up farming on Dad's homestead at Goodwin, where they raised four boys.



Taken April 14, 1947 at Harvey's wedding with Ernie and Jimmy as best men. Elsie Kopp, the bride, her two sisters, Evelyn and Margaret as bridesmaids.

In June, 1948, Mom, Dad, Jimmy and I took a 10,000 mile trip which took us to Niagara Falls, South to Texas, West to Seattle, then to Vancouver and home, taking in the Calgary Stampede. It was a very enjoyable trip and I am glad I was able to take a month's vacation with Jimmy as shortly after on July 21, 1948, he passed away at the age of 21 years.

In the years that passed, I helped my dad on the farm and worked at odd jobs in the winter which varied from flunky in a sawmill kitchen to driving truck. In the fall of 1954, I bought a quarter of land which I had been renting from Mrs. Evelyn Whitfield.

In 1954 a Valhalla Center girl caught my eye, Ruby Hoflin, daughter of John and Tilly Hoflin, and eldest of two girls and three boys was born at Homestead. She moved to Valhalla Center and clerked in the Co-op store there for three years then at Hanson Hardware in Grande Prairie, where I found her. Ruby and I were married on July 5, 1955 and built a small house on the farm which became too crowded and in December, 1965, remodelled and moved into the old family house which was built in 1920-21 where we lived comfortably with our six children.

Holly, born in 1956 took five years in 4-H sewing of which she did a lot, she also has her hair dressing license. She married Wayne Dobbyn July, 1974 and they have a son Carmen born April, 1976.

Arley, born 1957 took his schooling at Harry Balfour and the Grande Prairie Composite. He plans on apprenticing in mechanics.

Kevin, born in 1960, is taking wood construction at the Composite High School in which he seems quite interested.

Gordon, born in 1962, took two years in 4-H, won a first prize in sewing and likes baking so he is a real help at home.

Wendy, born in 1964, is taking sewing at school this year. She also enjoys ski-dooing.

Nancy, born in 1965, is starting to do some baking and enjoys ski-dooing.

We have been kept busy with taking over the family farm, renting some additional land and raising our children, who all share in the work.

LOUIS AND HERMAN REEVES

Louis and Herman Reeves — Louis homesteaded on S.W. 20-71-5-6 and his brother Herman S.E 20-71-5-6 on Woods Lake. They kept a number of cattle which they watered at the Lake. I can remember one time the cattle had broken through the ice. My dad helped pull them out but many were dead. The land was later sold to Billy Salmond who sold to Henry Unger (a Russian). His granddaughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Dave Thiesen now own it.

WALTER RICHARDS FAMILY

Walter and Dorothy Richards moved to the Five Mile Creek district from Grande Prairie during the Easter holiday in the spring of 1947. They had four children then — Alfred, Norman, Isabell and Carol. Louis was born two years later.



Mrs. East and daughter, Walter Richards, Mrs. Lila Young, Mr. East, Dorothy Richards and son, Louis, George Young.

That move was made with a hayrack and sleigh pulled by a team of horses borrowed from Cecil Lawrence. That was a long day for the whole family! The main road was covered with snow but passable so the first four miles were not too bad. The last three-quarters of a mile was blown in with snow, so a trail had to be made through the fields. They had to leave their car, a 1939 Ford, and tractor in town until the snow went and the roads dried up.

The Richards' house in Grande Prairie was beside the lot where everyone tied their horses. (The Bay parking lot today.) The Richards' kids started throwing boiled eggs at some kinds in a wagon. They found out later that it was the Slim Hutt family.

They moved to the E.½ 21-71-5-W6M. and lived in and old house that the former owner, Joe Tissington,

had moved from the N.W.¼ 22-71-5-W6M., several years earlier. Later that year Walter bought this quarter from Tissington's as well. The family grew up in the old house living there until a new home was built in 1962.



Richards children and the team.



Dorothy, Carol and Louis with pumpkins from her "Victory Garden".

They brought a John Deere AR tractor and a combine to the farm with them. There was only one other combine around then and that was a large horse-drawn, engine driven machine, owned by Bill Drynan. As a result, Walter did a lot of custom work for the neighbors those first few years.

Walter and Dorothy were both quite active in the community, helping to organize and supporting such things as the school picnic, the Christmas concert, school dances, and card parties. They were also active members of the U.F.A. and Royal Canadian Legion. In the early 1950's, they both spent a lot of time working to organize this end of the Grande Prairie East REA, helping to bring electricity to the community.

Jack Hunter was a favorite with the family. Walter and Jack hunted together and Jack taught the Richards boys, as well as many others, a lot about hunting and trapping. Walter, Jack and Slim Hutt built a hunting cabin near the Wapiti River. Just about everyone in the area who did any hunting found shelter in that cabin over the years. The bears finally did the cabin in.

Walter passed away, at the age of 60, on January 19, 1972. Dorothy now lives south of Grande Prairie. Alfred, Gwen and their boys, Brad and Randy live on and farm, two quarters of the original farm. Norman farms the other quarter but lives with his mother near Isabell (Mrs. Les Head) and family. Carol (Mrs. Dave McIlmoyle) and her family now live at Watson Lake, Yukon, and Louis is at Inuvik, N.W.T.

MURLAND AND VERA RIGLER — written by Vera Rigler

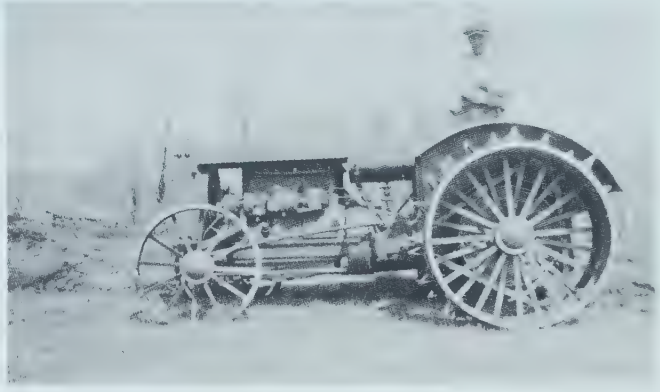
Murland Rigler born in Grand Coule, Saskatchewan came to Grande Prairie in 1927 as a young boy with his parents.

Vera Rigler (Snider) born in Chilliwack, British Columbia came to Grande Prairie in 1928. I then worked around Crystal Creek.

Murland and I were married in 1930 at



Murland Rigler, 1928.



Murland Rigler on the tractor working on Clarkson's doing plowing in 1929.

Beaverlodge. Our first house was a two room place across from his Dad's.

We had $300.00 to start out with and two horses. Had to haul water one mile also haul fire wood for the stoves, there was no money to buy coal. We used kerosene lamps.

We travelled by wagon in summer, sleigh in the winter, if it wasn't too cold. There were some cold winters. We did mostly grain farming then, with horses and hard work all day, and half the night.

We had hardships when we went homesteading around Crooked Creek. We had to walk to town. We often had to eat rabbits which were very good then. Then the rabbits ate our garden.

We had 12 children and it was tough in those days.

Bill Rigler is married lives in Grande Prairie, Alberta. Vic Rigler is married lives in Vernon, British Columbia. Jean (Rigler) Tuffin married lives in Rutland, British Columbia. Gerald married lives in Grande Prairie, Alberta. Cliff married lives in High Prairie, Alberta. Helen Rigler Bellwood lives in Fox Creek, Alberta. Donald married lives in Grande Prairie, Alberta. Gloria (Rigler) Walega married lives in Clairmont, Alberta. Jimmie Rigler is not married, lives in Grande Prairie, Alberta. Kay (Rigler) Stetar married, lives in Grande Prairie, Alberta. Vernon married lives in Grande Prairie, Alberta. This was quite a family and we were very proud of them. We have thirty grandchildren.

Entertainment was community affairs, such as school concerts, dances and ball games, or just visit the neighbors and have card games.

Those years everyone helped each other and that was the way all the people were.

We farmed around Crystal Creek and Five Mile for quite a few years. Then Murland went to town to work. We moved to town a year later. Some of the children were born on the farm the rest in hospital after we moved to town.

Had no doctor for some, as the roads were too bad. Mother Rigler was the midwife then. Some of the kids attended Crystal Creek school and finished up in Grande Prairie schools.

Murland passed on in the year of 1966 age of 56 years.

HENRY SAWATZKY FAMILY

Paul Mozzler had bought the N.E. 17-71-5-6 from Charlie Hughes. Paul didn't get it paid for as he got some of his hand taken off while sawing wood, gangerene set in and he passed away. So the land was in the hands of the Public Trustee as no will was left. Henry Sawatzky, his wife and family undertook to buy the land in the late 1920's. He had a large family of eight. The children that were old enough all went to the Five Mile School. They were very smart children not only in the classroom but were really athletic and musical.

Henry never enjoyed the best of health. The land he bought was not meant for farming. They always had a good garden, a few chickens and a cow so did not lack food.

Each year Henry would try to get something besides food from the land. The last several years the neighbors helped him as he was failing in health and passed away.

Mrs. Sawatzky carried on by herself for several years with the help of the neighbors. She took sick and suddenly passed away about 1939. This left a small family to fare for themselves. The oldest would be about 14 years, some were under school age. They were strong Baptists and though many of the neighbors would gladly have taken the children and kept them in the district where they would have been closer together. The Church people took them, several of them were adopted locally by members of the church. Several of the children have now passed away.

The childrens names were; Erna, Herta (Hattie), Rita, Herman, Henry, Rosanna, Alma and Edward.

J. W. SAWYER

James Wylie Sawyer was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1884. He filed on the East ¼ 26-71-5, October 2, 1911 in the Five Mile area. In 1912 he married Rebecca Agar a nurse from Regina who had come to the area to her cousin, Mrs. Bob Cochrane.

Wylie didn't do too much to earn his living on the homestead. He worked for the municipality and the government in different capacities. One girl Ena was born to them.

In June, 1940 they moved to Spirit River as he was now inspector of municipal affairs.

The Sawyers retired to Victoria and in 1963 Wylie passed away. His wife Becky is still alive and lives in a nursing home. Ena Robinson is a widow and also lives in Victoria.

FRANCIS W. SCHENK — by Frances Schenk

My family came to Wetaskiwin, Alberta in 1906. My mother was widowed in 1909. My mother came to Grande Prairie, March 29, 1916 and married Herman Ellert. He had filed on his homestead one and a half miles straight east of Grande Prairie in 1911, (now Eldoes Trailer Court). He was a harness maker by trade and opened up his harness shop in 1912. He closed his business and started to farm. His farming efforts were not very fruitful as his land had a muskeg and was too low. Planting was too late and frost too early. He got into debt and lost his land. Frank Donald became the next owner.

I came in June, 1916 and stayed until 1923 when I got work on the E.D. and the B.C. railway. When I got paid twice a month I figured it was better than the land. I worked forty-two years until age sixty-five.

I started as a section hand and finished my service as a locomotive foreman. I am now 77 years old.

In 1916 I homesteaded and proved up the N.E.¼ 16-71-5-W6 but did not have to reside on it as it was less than nine miles from home. Don Noyes had thrown it up and became a successful farmer near Dimsdale. Cecil Lawrence now owns it. Tom Newton had land on the east side, Mr. Young on the north, Clark on the south and Charlie Joackum on the west side. The lake was called Jack Pine Lake at that time. Joe Tissington bought my land for $1000.

In the early years we had a lot of sixty below weather, the lowest registered temperature on government thermometer at Grande Prairie was seventy-

four below. Between 1919 and 20 was the winter of the deep snow. The railway could not operate for about one month.

In those days Bear Creek had Dolly Varden trout as well as other fish.

Going back I will mention wood was the main fuel and Ellert and I delivered green cord wood to Joe Voz's flour mill for three dollars and fifty cents a cord.

Lighting was provided by coal oil and gasoline lamps. I was one of the first members of the Grande Prairie Weasel Hockey Club.

I married Christine Dolemo in 1925 and we have three children and have thirteen grandchildren, seven in the Wanham area, three in the South Wapiti area and three in Dawson Creek.

CHARLES SIMS FAMILY

We came from England to Grande Prairie by boat in the spring of 1926. Dad was bothered with malaria and bronchitis in England and his doctor told him if he wanted to live he would have to move to a drier climate. So they came to Canada on a soldier settlement plan. The government put them on a homestead six and one-half miles straight east of Grande Prairie. It only had a house and barn and just enough brush cleared for the buildings. There were only three children then; Ronnie, four, Winnie, two and Mary, six months. Dad cleared the land but he was not cut out for a farmer so a lot of the work mother did. They bought pigs and cows which mother looked after. There was no well so we had to melt snow.



Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sims.

We had another brother or sister every year and a half to two years until there was nine of us. When Ronnie the oldest, started school they had a choice of schools. We lived at the end of the road, which stopped at our gate. There was a cut bank on both sides of the creek, where the road should have crossed. The road went north half a mile before our place and then swung back east again. So my parents decided to send us to the Five Mile School, which was two and one-half miles west of us. We walked most of the time, never missing school except when we were sick, which was very seldom. Our mother made a little bag and hung it around our necks with a piece of camphor in it. It looked like wax and had a strong odor. It sure kept the colds away.

Mother was sure a good gardener, and taught us kids to work hard. They tried to farm for a while and then they got short of feed and sold their cattle. They had three cows and three two year old heifers all in calf. The cattle went to Saskatchewan, the farmers started to farm again down there after the droughts. I can sure remember the hungry thirties. The wind blew the seed off our garden into the creek valley. We went out every day to cover the spuds as the wind blew the dirt off them. We found vegetables growing in the creek valley that summer.

We had several cutbanks in the creek that had about a two foot layer of coal across them. We used to take sacks on our backs and fill them half full, line them up and let them go down the bank by themselves and pick them up at the bottom and carry them home on our backs. I can also remember cutting blocks of wood at the bottom of the creek in the winter, splitting them in half or quarters, filling a sack and hauling them up on our backs and putting them on a cutter at the top of the creek, pulling it home by hand. Another incident I remember is going to school one day in the winter (there were four of us going then.) It sure was cold, Bill and Mary got cold half way so Ronnie and I told them to go into John and Mary Blimkies to get warm. When we got to school, Brian Pearcy asked us what we were doing at school, he said it was 65 below. When Bill and Mary got to school and got warm he sent us home.

Finally mother put in a four acre garden by hand. Dad took vegetables to town Tuesday and Friday until we lost our horses, then we children packed the vegetables twice a week six and one-half miles. Ronnie and I carried thirty-five pounds each, Bill and Mary twenty-five pounds each.

We used to walk every Sunday to Sunday School, which we never missed. Ronnie had to miss school in the afternoon to help mother so he only made the morning in school that term. When he was old enough, Ronnie joined the Army and went overseas to England. Ronnie is now married and living in Cherry Grove near Coal Lake Air Base. Winnie left home and had a few jobs around town.

Mary is married and living in Edmonton.
Bill is married and living in East Pine, B.C.
John is married and living in Edmonton.
Grace is married and living in Red Deer.
Marg is married and living in Calgary.
Wes is married and living in Edmonton.
David is married and living in Edmonton.
Joan is married and is living in Edmonton.
Edith is married and is living in Calgary.
Dorothy is married and is living in Lethbridge

Mother and dad moved from the farm to a house one mile east and half a mile south of town and then later moved into town. In 1964 they moved to Magrath, Alberta. Dad passed away July 25, 1974, mother passed away April 30, 1975. They are buried in Magrath twenty miles south of Lethbridge.



George Small family.

GEORGE AND ANN SMALL SR.

George Small was born in Leduc in 1902 and his wife Annie Larson was born in Black Hill, South Dakota, United States of America in 1907. They met in Czar, Alberta and were married in 1927. He worked on the railroad in British Columbia for about three years. Then he moved to a farm at Czar, Alberta. From there he came to the Peace Country in 1936 to look over the area.

He made arrangements to rent land at Rio Grande and then in 1937 he moved with his wife Anne and six children to the Peace. During the depression and dry years on the Prairies the Government was paying the freight to move families north to the Peace. So he moved north with two freight cars of livestock and machinery. Sending the family up by passenger train. He settled at Rio Grande where one more child was born.

In 1944 he purchased the Moore farm one mile east of Grande Prairie. Where he moved everything up by horses and wagon. He farmed there until he passed away in 1959 at age of 57. His wife Anne passed away one year later at age 52.

During the time he spent farming east of Grande Prairie. He hauled mail for three years and also was a butcher for Frank MacDonald and Jack Howarth for 20 years.

Five of their children still live in the country. Two sons George, Art and one daughter Thelma Crerar are still living on the home place. Barbara McRae and Evelyn Sutherland are still living on farms in the district. Shirley Fulk lives in Grande Prairie and Edna Regan lives in Rutland, British Columbia.

WILLIAM SMITH — by Margaret Blimkie

My father came to Grande Prairie, Alberta from Saskatchewan in May of 1917, where he homesteaded a quarter six miles east of Grande Prairie. He then put a building on the place and came back to Saskatchewan for me, that was in October of the same year. We took the train from Saltcats, Saskatchewan to Edmonton where we waited until we could get the train for Grande Prairie. It was packed with people going to the Peace River Country. We landed in Grande Prairie after dark and went to the Salmond Hotel which was crowded. The next morning Billy Salmond drove us to our farm, I remember it was the 27th of October, 1917, there isn't much more to say.



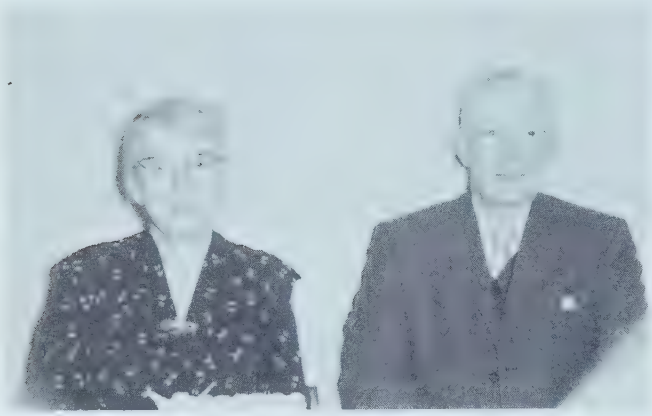
Wm. Smith and grandchildren, Bert, Rob and Ann Blimkie.

My father bought lumber to build a barn which Napoleon Pellerin a neighbor, and a carpenter on the same section built for us. In 1925, I married Herbert Blimkie and we stayed with my Dad until purchasing a farm nearby which was then owned by Anna Morgan and are residing here now.

My dad, Willim Smith, passed away in 1942.

ELIZABETH AND EDGAR STERLING — by Winnie Sterling

I don't know much about my husband's family background but I will try. His parents farmed about forty miles from Hilda, Saskatchewan. When Jim's (my husband) mother was pregnant with Jim, who was the only child, her husband took her to Tuxford. He was born November 6, 1921. She stayed in Tuxford until just before spring breakup. He came and got them with a team and grain box. It was a long drive home.



Mr. and Mrs. Sterling — 50th anniversary.



Sterling family.

In 1924 because of drought conditions in Saskatchewan they decided to come to the Peace River country. They came by train to a farm near Sexsmith where they stayed for one and a half years. They then moved to their own place three miles south and half mile east of grande Prairie. They only had a quarter section with Bear Creek running on the west and south of it. They always farmed with horses, raised cattle, chickens and sold butter. Mrs. Sterling came to town with horse (Lady) and buggy in summer time. The cattle roamed the creek valley and south. Jim rode to school on horseback and went to the old Montrose school.

The Sterlings farmed until their machinery wore out and they got old enough to retire. Their herd of cattle had T.B. and had to be disposed of. They sold their land to Tissingtons as Mr. Sterling had broken his leg along with all the other hardships. They retired into town and lived in a house on the south side. In September, 1971 Mr. Sterling passed away. Mrs. Sterling passed away January 9, 1972.

JIM STERLING FAMILY — by Winnie Sterling

Jim Sterling born November 6, 1921 came with his parents to the Peace River Country in 1924. He took his schooling at the old Montrose school. His wife Winnie came with her parents to the Five Mile area in 1926. She got her education at Five Mile School.



Jimmy, Winnie Sterling and family, 1965.

Jim joined the Army and was stationed in Grande Prairie until it was shut down and he was transferred to Suffield. I also joined the Army. One Christmas when I was coming back to Edmonton by train there was only one seat left to sit in and that was by Jim, this is how we met. We became engaged the next Christmas and the following Christmas we were married.

After we came back from the war Jim's first job and our first house was with Howarth's slaughter house, just south of the city. The slaughter house burned down so we moved to his parents farm. They gave us a big granary and they lined and filled it with shavings that we hauled from a sawmill sight south of us with horses and sleigh. They also built us a 10 x 12

kitchen on one end. We raised our own chickens and goats, and grew a good garden. The water was hauled from the creek but Jim and I finally dug a well which was seventeen feet deep. We had seven acres. Our transportation to town was by team and sleigh in the winter. Jim's dad had a horse and we had one to make a team. In the summer we went with horse and buggy. Our four children were all born while we were on the farm.



Brother Jack taking Winnie to the airport when she was in the army.

When my in-laws sold the farm we moved to town. Jim worked a lot for Ben and Jack Patterson on the farm. We moved to town January 28, 1965. Jim got a job with the City. Our daughter Ruth who was a nurse is married and lives in Red Deer. She has three children; Irene, Doreen and Bobby. Ray is married and has one daughter, three year old Juanita. Roy lives in Hythe. Rex is still with us. We now own our own home in Grande Prairie.

Jim passed away in March, 1977.

BILLY TAYLOR — Mildred Lawrance

Billy Taylor was born in 1902, in Scotland. As a young fellow he came to Canada and stopped at Calgary. In 1928 he came to Grande Prairie, and bought land in the Five Mile area from Mr. Lake S.W. 8-71-5-6. In Scotland he had been a highland dancer and performed at many concerts. But since coming to Canada other things have taken up his time. He worked his farm first with horses which was the thing in those days. He also worked around the town of Grande Prairie as gardener. For ten years he worked for undertaker J. B. Oliver. Dug many graves as well as acting as caretaker at the cemetery.

The first recollection I have of Billy was when I was eleven years old. People used to come for miles and pick blueberries in that territory. Lydia Card and I rode horseback down to the Lake quarter to pick blueberries. Billy had fenced it. We tied our horses to the fence and just about had our pails full when Billy showed up. He being a stranger, we were very scared, dropped our pails of blueberries and got on our horses and never let them stop until we were home. I always wondered if he canned our blueberries.

Billy is retired now and lives on his land. He is a happy natured person and remained a bachelor all of his life. He spends his time watching T.V., trapping. He also spends a lot of time in town visiting with old friends and neighbors.

DAVE THIESSEN FAMILY

Dave Thiessen, son of Isaac and Katherine Thiessen of Lethbridge and Flora Thiessen, daughter



Dave Theissen family.

of Peter and Margaret Schmidt of La Glace, were married in June, 1954 and lived in Grande Prairie for two years. We moved to the farm located on S.W.¼ 20-71-5-6, on June 30, 1956 after purchasing it from Flora's grandfather, Henry Unger, Sr.

Our three children were: Donna, born in September, 1955, Ken born December, 1957 and Joan born July, 1959. They attended Harry Balfour School in Grande Prairie, the bus came to within a mile of our home until Donna was in grade three. Then we had the bus come by our place, which was very convenient, especially in the winter time. From Harry Balfour the children went on to attend the Composite High School in Grande Prairie.

The old log house that was on the farm was in poor condition, so we fixed up the double garage that Grandpa had built, and converted it into a three room house. Later, when the family increased we built on two small bedrooms. We didn't have running water, and propane was used for cooking and heating, we used a gas lamp for lights. In 1959 we got the power, and this was a great improvement.

Farming was done using power equipment, and it was mixed farming with growing crops of grain and grass, raising cattle, pigs and chickens.

Water was obtained from the well which was on the farm, and in 1969 a new well was drilled for our new home that was built that year.

JOE TISSINGTON FAMILY — written by Nora Tissington

Joseph Tissington, along with his father, (Stephen), mother and three sisters, and a sister-in-law, sailed from England, April, 1912. They first went to Edmonton, and stayed there for some months, where Joe worked on a dairy farm.



Mrs. Tissington, Betty, Ross, Colleen.

In the fall of 1912, Joe and his father came over the Edson trail to Grande Prairie, Stephen riding horseback and Joe walking. Later, Joe returned to Edmonton to bring in his mother and some farm implements and household goods. This was a difficult trip for his mother who was 60 years old at the time, and she was very disappointed to see some of her prized goods spilled over the famous "break-neck hill".

For a while, Joe freighted over the Edson trail and then he proved up his homestead in the Five Mile district. His father, along with his two brothers and brother-in-law (they had come to Grande Prairie in late 1911) settled west of town.

With the start of the First World War, Joe enlisted in the Canadian Engineers, and was sent to England. While there, he visited his old home in Derbyshire, and there married Nora Grainger, an old school friend. He brought his "war bride" back to Canada in 1919.

Joe and his wife farmed in the Five Mile district for twenty-five years, and during that time Joe served as Councillor and Reeve of the municipality for fifteen years. He also served on the Grande Prairie Hospital Board, and was Secretary-Treasurer for the Five Mile School District.

Some years later, Nora's mother (Mrs. Grainger Wright) and her brother, Bruce, came out to Grande Prairie to join the family. Nora recalls, "We had many good friends and neighbours — the John Blimke family — the Bill Boyd family — Napoleon and Lucy Pellerin and Ray — the Bayens family — the Whitfields — the Hedley Johnsons — the Mills — the Tom Newtons — the Evans — Mr. Ellert, who had a pig farm on what we called "the slough". There was Norman Langille, who later went down east to manage a shingle mill — Mr. Smith and daughter Maggie, who married Herb Blimkie. Among the earlier settlers were Cider, a trapper — Bill Hiloski — and Bill Drynan, an old gold miner who periodically went back to the Yukon taking eggs and butter which he sold on the way up there. Later, came the Floener family, and Slim Hutt and his mother, also the Lawrences and the Harles. It was a happy, hard-working community. We hadn't much time for visiting, but we did get together at the Christmas concerts and summer picnics, and at the occasional dance."



The hunters, Ross Tissington and Carl Peterson.

The Tissingtons recall one incident a little out of the ordinary, which occurred when the police were searching for Albert Johnson, a suspected murderer (they never did catch him.) While hunting for him in the Five Mile district, they came upon a neighbour,

Louis Reeves, making a fire in the brush. The police shot Louis' dog and were about to make the mistake of arresting Louis, scaring the poor man half to death, when they realized their error and so they fined Louis instead, for having a fire in the brush. Louis left Grande Prairie soon after this incident, and the Unger family moved into his place. For a few years homesteading was hard going. The shortage of water was a problem, and Joe had to haul water from Mud Lake for the stock and for the house, he hauled water from the Pellerin well. After a while he moved the house to the Langille quarter, and there drilled a good well.

"We raised five children, who received their early education at the Five Mile school. They are: Bette (Mrs. John Wilson, Vernon); Colleen (Mrs. L. W. Irsons Vancouver); Ross, still in Grande Prairie; he served in the Second World War; Frank, now in Arizona; and Eric, still in Grande Prairie."

As our good friends, we must also include Mr. Kujath, Brian Pearcy and Gertie Brightwell, who were excellent teachers in the Five Mile School. After twenty-five years of farming, Joe sold his five quarters and moved to the old Marfleet place in Grande Prairie, where he and his wife now live, retired.

H. UNGER FAMILY — THREE GENERATION STORY — written by M. Grace Lirondelle (nee Unger)

It was the time of the Bolshevik revolt in Russia. When Henry Unger and his wife (the former Mary Konrad) decided to leave Kleefeld in Siberia, it was not a sudden decision. In his position as elected head man of the village, he had access to information that life would become increasingly more unstable than it had been during the Czarist regime. As he was a landowner (he homesteaded a quarter section) he knew the revolutionary Communist government would probably confiscate his holdings. There was also every indication that the freedom to practice their Mennonite religion would be curtailed. He approached the board set up by the Mennonite leaders and learned that there was homestead land available in Canada.

As he set the wheels in motion to emigrate, he was unable to sell his land, only the buildings on it. He and his family set out for Moscow where all were able to obtain passports except for Henry, himself. It was a time of suspicion and mistrust. Rumor had it that he had a good deal of money and hence would not be allowed to leave.

He dispatched first his elder three daughters, one of whom (Mary) was married. Then he arranged passage for the remaining four and his wife — Henry, age 13, Jake, Helen and Sarah, only three years old. Henry, Sr. remained behind.

They embarked on the ship Matagama fortunate that they were in a position to pay the fare. The voyage was not unpleasant although Sarah became ill enroute. When they arrived in Canada, temporary quarters had been set up for the immigrants in a military barracks and they were well treated. Language was, of course, a barrier.

It had been decided that their destination would be Rosthern, Saskatchewan, which they reached by train.



Jake and Sarah Unger upon arrival in Rosthern, Sask.



The Unger family.

It took six months longer before Henry Sr. was able to untangle the red tape, obtain a passport, and join his family in Rosthern. He rented a farm for about a year all the while hearing of homestead land available in the Peace River Country. Once again he packed up his family and moved to Flying Shot, Alberta where he rented a farm for another year; then moved to the Five Mile Creek area and rented the farm which he eventually bought from Billy Salmond. He had managed to smuggle enough money out of Russia to establish himself. This was in 1929.

The farm prospered because of his careful use of the land and his exacting and frugal ways. He farmed with horse drawn machinery long after everyone else

had switched to modern methods. He had a deep respect for the land and was firm in his belief that the old ways were best. The trees he planted as saplings grew to a fine stand, lining the driveway.

Helen, Jake and Sarah attended Five Mile Creek School and were active in community sports — Helen in basketball, Sarah in volleyball, Jake in hockey.

Henry Sr. and his wife continued farming the half section of fertile, productive land until 1952 when ill health forced him to retire from his active role. He moved to Grande Prairie and rented the farm to his eldest son, Henry and his wife, Susie (nee Rempel) and their six children; a seventh was born while they lived there.

They farmed there until 1956. Those years were not productive from a profit standpoint, but farm life agreed with the children. Although born and bred in a town environment, they adapted readily to the rural existence. The five eldest — Grace, Verna, Don, Jim, and John all attended Five Mile Creek School at some time or another during this time.

Farming methods, at least on this farm, had not changed over the years. The work was still done by horse power, hard and long tedious hours. There were no modern conveniences such as electricity and telephones. After a series of virtual crop failures and the pressures of a family of seven to feed, clothe and educate, Henry was forced to return to a steady job and town life.

The farm was sold to a granddaughter Flora Thiessen (nee Schmidt) and her husband, Dave. They are the present owners.

Mary Konrad Unger died in 1953. Her health had never been good following a buggy accident in which she was seriously injured.

Henry Unger, Sr. died in August, 1963, a proud, self-sufficient man, born of the stuff of which pioneers are made. He left a legacy of children and grandchildren imbued with the same belief in the virtues of hard work, determination and self-sufficiency.

GERRIT WAAYENBERG — by Jane Waayenberg

In 1952, Gerrit Waayenberg, his wife Jane and three boys, Nelis (7 years), Pieter (2 years) and Gerry (6 months) left Putten, (Gld.) Holland, March 25th for Canada with intentions of going farming in the Edmonton area. After seven days of travelling by boat, we landed in the Halifax harbour. The boat trip was a real experience. The food was fit for a king, but with the boat rocking so badly, it seldom stayed on the tables. Dishes would go crashing to the floor and slide from corner to corner as we hit the waves. Many people were too sick to eat.

From Halifax, we went to Edmonton, it took five days by train. The trip was hard on the family, especially Pieter and Gerry. We were welcomed by my sister Nelly Snellen and husband Henry. With us we had enough clothing for several years and our furniture which included a dining set, living-room set, bedroom suite, dishes, etc.

First we settled in at the Snellens for three weeks and Gerrit found his first dairy job in Canada on David Seutter's farm near Edmonton. Nelis attended a district school, he had previously had six months of schooling in Holland. With assistance from the Immigration field man, Wierenga, we headed to Sexsmith with intentions of helping build a Christian Reform Church in La Glace. It took us two days by train from Edmonton to reach Grande Prairie. We stayed four days in a hotel in Clairmont. For the next six months we worked at Lloyd Moore's mixed farm. We found life difficult since we didn't know English and the Canadian ways. We had to be dependant on others, since we didn't have a vehicle. We had wonderful neighbors, the Duda and Krzsik families, which made this half year pass smoothly.

Before snow fell in October, we once again, packed up our belongings and rented a house in Grande Prairie for $45 a month. Gerrit worked on the plainer mill (when there was work) for 80c an hour. Between doing the wash and running after the children, I helped out with income by doing ironing, 25c per white shirt. After six months we got tired of city life and wages so went working for Douglas Clarkson (mixed farming) in the Crystal Creek area. That spring we bought our first vehicle, a second hand Fargo for $1400. For the first time we felt independant and could go to town and church on our own. Work lasted until November, it was a happy seven months, as the Clarksons were good people to work for.

An opportunity to go farming came when the Immigration representative Thompson informed us of land for sale, the Dick Evans' place. Gerrit made the purchase. In December, 1954, we, for the last time, moved and settled in a place of our own. Gerrit converted the horse barn into a dairy barn, using the other dairy barn for calves and pigs. It and the milk house were inspected and approved by dairy inspectors. The first year on the farm, Douglas Clarkson helped us by supplying the machinery which was a great help. The next years Gerrit managed on his own. We had seven milk cows and two young sows. With the pigs and cows we tried to make a go of it. At this time, our first addition to be born in Canada arrived, Henry John. In 1960, Gerrit's Dad visited us for five weeks. Shortly after returning to Holland, he passed away. In the spring of 1961, our pig barn burnt down with eight sows and ninety-six baby pigs.

After the loss of the pig barn, our decision was to go completely into the dairy business. In May, 1962 with carpenter Sam Wilson and local help we built our barn to accommodate fifty-two cows, even though we started with thirty. Gradually we increased to fifty.

Nelis attended the Fairview Agricultural School for two years. In 1963, we had a female addition to the family, Annette. The boys were excited to have a wee sister even if she often got colic. My mother came to visit her children in Canada.

After years of hard work and cleaning the barn by hand, a new barn cleaner was welcomed. Then in 1965, last but not least, Ron joined the family. We built the house where we are presently living. The last improvement in the dairy was installed, a pipeline in 1972. Gerrit's two sisters from Holland visited us for three weeks in that summer. The youngest sister passed away two years later.

In 1974, we with Annette and Ron took a six week trip to Holland. We saw our old country again, filled

with memories and many friends and relatives. This same year my mother passed away. Gerrit's oldest brother, Bill and wife Greda visited us for three weeks in 1975.

After twenty-two years of dairying, Gerrit has semi-retired from milking and is going to enjoy his field work. With half the family married, I enjoy my greenhouse, as a hobby. Nelis, Pieter and Gerry are married and living in the Grande Prairie area. We are grandparents of six children. Henry, Annette and Ron are still at home.

Through the years, we had our hardships, but they are out-numbered by happy memories with our family and friends.

TOM WARDEN

The Wardens came from somewhere in Scotland. Tommy's family settled in Williamstown, Glengarry County, Ontario, where, on March 24, 1888, Tommy, the youngest of a family of eight, was born. His mother died in childbirth, so he was raised by his mother's parents, in Huntingdon, Quebec, where he went to school.

In 1910, Tommy came west on one, of the two, harvest-excursion trains that left Montreal. Everyone on board was either going to Moose Jaw or to Saskatoon. He and his companions, being green, decided to get off at Brandon, but didn't like it there, so they came on to Saskatoon, too.

Tommy kept hearing tales of the great Peace River country, and decided to have a look at it. He came to Edson where he met the McDonald brothers, Jock and Bill, and another fellow, who hadn't liked the country he had left behind. They bought a pack horse and, on August 16, 1911, started to walk along the Edson Trail to Grande Prairie. And a trail it was!: running through heavy timber, where the trail was just wided enough for a wagon to pass. There were hills; one name Break Neck Hill, for obvious reasons, muskegs; where if crossed in the wrong place, your horse would go down out of sight, and stretches of corduroy. It amused him to see the men and women sitting up bumping along in their wagons, on this, as happy as if they were going to a Sunday picnic. There were stopping places along the trail, such as 'The Frenchman's' or 'The Scotchman's', where you would stable your horses and get something to eat, if you had the money. Or you could just camp out and eat rabbits and prairie chicken, shot along the way.

Some of the rivers had ferries running; others were forded. They crossed the Smoky by row boat; the horse swam behind.

They arrived in Grande Prairie, August 27, and started looking for land the next day. Tommy chose the S.W. 35-71-5-W6th, later to be known as the Five Mile district, for his homestead. He then went back to Edson and worked for that winter.

He remembers the barn-of-a-boarding house in Edson, where he stayed for a few nights. Men, who worked on the Grand Trunk railroad, came down from the west, sick with typhoid fever, and all slept in the one big room with everyone else.

He thinks of January in 1911, when he worked at the Tony River, where they set up camp and lived in tents. The temperature hung between 40 and 60 degrees below Fahrenheit, for days, so the men refused to work their horses. Then it warmed up enough to work out with their bare hands. It turned colder again, but the tents were warm and comfortable.

He remembers watching the big road building equipment working on the three miles of road at Break Neck Hill. It took 32 men, at $1.75 a day, for a ten hour day, five weeks to build. When they complained, they got $2.25 a day, for the hard, tedious work, of bridge building. Two Frenchmen dug holes to set the piling in. The pile-driver was a huge ton iron weight, to be pulled up, to the height of twenty feet, by a big horse on a heavy rope. Here it was tripped to drop, driving the piling down a few inches. The second horse was waiting to be hooked on and pull it back up, meeting the first horse on its way back, ready for the next pull. With luck, a piling would be set in half a day. Then came the one-piece stringers; doubled 3" by 12" by 60 feet long, to be lifted into place. Pay was better this part of the bridge building; $3.00 a day.

Jim Frazier was the Edson Trail 'road and bridge' boss. They worked along the Edson Trail for 70 miles; then started the bridge at Tony River, a span of 45 feet; later they worked on the House River bridge, a span of 65 feet; then they moved to the Big Smoky and built a bridge across a ravine. The work was finished about the middle of April. He, then, left to get down to the business of homesteading.

Tommy remembers the camps from Edson to Athabasca, where the ham and eggs, brought from Edmonton, were anything but fresh. The boiled eggs were carefully cracked to the side of your plate, to be discarded if they were too old. When they were, others were tried in the hopes that they would be better. He did have some good meals too; a breakfast of bacon with mustard, an egg, toast, two big cups of tea and a dill pickle, would start his day right! Sometimes the cook would have fresh rabbit, a welcome change from the spoiling hams!

He made many trips back and forth to Edson. He recalls one trip when everyone told, John Parent and him, that they would never make it with their low wide-wheeled wagon. But they did make it; in nine days. The rabbits were so thick, that they ate their dish towel and the leather off their suspenders, while they slept.

He remembers the trip with a team of bulls, starting out, in a blizzard, from Axons, their starting point (now the Sutherland farm) across to Grande Prairie. There was a tar-paper shack, where they stopped for the first night. (The 14 mile rock, on highway No. 34, now marks this spot.) The trail, which they travelled the next day, ran north around the Bulford Lake and down through the Lindsay school district, to the Smoky. Here they crossed on the ice. The trip went well from there on. The oxen covered just as many miles in a day, but just a little slower, than horses.

Some people talk of a ford on the Smoky, but Tommy never found it. Their freight loads, of only 1500 pounds, were rafted across, carried by the current, to land down stream from where they went in. The horses swam behind a row boat, until the ferry was put in at the Bezanson site.

Passengers and supplies were boated from Watino, the end of the railroad, up the Smoky to Bezanson. From there, they were freighted, by wagon, to Grande Prairie. This was a job Tommy did for some time, to supplement his homestead.

Tommy stabled his horses in the Billy Bain's barn, at Bezanson, while hauling freight. One trip, he recalls that they were going up the steep hill out of the Bezanson site, with a heavy load of 3000 pounds, when his horses lost their footing. The load pulled the horses, in a heap, part way back down the hill. When they got stopped, he and the load were fine; but his horses were in a tangle, the pole was broken, one horse was kicking, trying to get to its feet and the other, luckily, kept its head down. Tommy got a rope on the horses' flying feet and tied them to a tree, making it safer to go in and untangle them. The McDonald brothers came along and gave him a hand. They thought they might have to cut the harness, but Tommy wouldn't hear of it, since the harness was worth more than the horses. They finally got enough snaps and buckles undone, and the horses were able to get up. Wonders of wonders, they didn't have a scratch on them! Billy was kept busy the rest of the day, getting the wagon off the stump, that was holding it, and easing it back down the hill where he installed a new pole.

Whenever volunteer labour was needed in the community, Tom was always one of the first to lend a hand. In 1941 at the annual ratepayers meeting, he was nominated to take a position on the council for the Rural Municipality. At this meeting they decided to amalgamate Grande Prairie Municipality 709 and Bear Lake Municipality 740 and form one municipality. In September of 1949, he was elected councillor for Division One, defeating Neil McLaughlin.

In 1951, Tom was named to the first council of Grande Prairie County No. 1. He was councillor in Division No. 1. In 1959 Tom moved to Grande Prairie so was no longer eligible to serve the county. One must live in the county to be a councillor.

Tom is enjoying his retirement. He has made many trips back to Ontario to see his relatives. He also has a lot of relatives who come up and stay with him for a month at a time. He still gets out and visits his old neighbors. For his age, he has a very good memory and gets around on his own.

WILLIAM WHITFIELD

Mr. and Mrs. William Whitfield came to the Five Mile district and homesteaded around the year 1913. Mrs. Whitfield was a school teacher and rode horseback daily back and forth to the schools where she taught as far away as Clairmont. Bill was a great horseman, his horses were always well groomed and very well fed, and his harness in new looking condition. They milked a few cows and both worked towards improving their homestead. Their income was supplemented by Mrs. Whitfield's wages which would be $400-$500 a year.

Bill passed away quite early in life but Mrs. Whitfield kept the farm going by hiring a man to help her. Two of the men that worked for her were Robert Wilson and Art White. She finally sold the livestock and rented the farm to a neighbor for a few years.



Mrs. Whitfield and one of their beautiful colts.

Then she decided to sell to Ernie Pellerin and moved down with her brother in Southern Alberta. She later moved to a nursing home where she passed away in the 1960's.

ROBERT WILSON

Robert Wilson came to the Five Mile district in 1932 to work for Dick Evans. When there wasn't work for him on the farm he would work for other farmers. Wages at that time were ten dollars a month. Home to him was the Evans farm, where the three girls thought of him as a brother. We fought like brothers and sisters too.

In early 1940 he left the district and joined the Army. After the war he went back home to where he was raised at Salt Prairie (near High Prairie.) He then married a school friend of his, June Babcock. They have one girl Judy. Bob retired from the farm after they had a baler accident in which June was hurt. They moved to High Prairie and Bob rented the farm and worked in High Prairie.

About 1971 he bought an acreage in Yarrow, B.C. and they moved there. In 1975 he sold his acreage and his farm at Salt Prairie and bought a house in Chilliwack where they are enjoying their retirement.



Bob and Judy Wilson at Salt Prairie.

JOHN AND DORA WISHART — James and Beatrice Longsdale and John McKellar

Born in 1874 at Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, John Wishart and his wife and three children; Doreen, Mildred and Cathleen came to the Grande Prairie district in 1919 from Mikado, Saskatchewan. One year later Mrs. Wishart's parents followed them. James and Beatrice Longsdale came from England to Grande Prairie in 1920.

Living in town for a short time, the Wisharts had two more children born to them, Marjorie and Robert. The children took their education at the Montrose School from 1920-1939. In 1929 the depression was setting in, so the Wisharts, Longsdales and John McKellar decided to move to the country, where they could raise their own food. They each took up homesteads, land on the banks of the Wapiti. The Wisharts and Longsdales homesteaded and built frame houses, brushed and broke up their land with an axe and horse drawn plough. They grew large gardens and oats for feed for their cattle and horses which roamed on the banks of the Wapiti. There was lots of wood to heat their houses and used coal oil lights for lighting their buildings. They drove to town with horse and wagon or sleigh.

John McKellar homesteaded near the Wisharts and Longsdales. He built a log cabin. His first homestead was the present location of the Hudson Bay Store on



John Wishart children.



John Wishart family in 1919 when first arriving in Grande Prairie.



John Wishart, Wapiti Valley, at present site of pulp mill.



Mr. and Mrs. James Longsdale.



John McKellar and friend.

Richmond Ave. and east to the Co-op Store and City Centre Mall. He had come from Ontario and used to tell of his experiences when he had learned to sail on the Great Lakes around Cape Horn. One time his boat capsized in the mid Pacific. He moved to the Klondike in 1898 before coming to Grande Prairie.

The Wishart children all married, Doreen married David Hartman of Edmonton, they had three children. David and John (deceased) and Randy, Mildred married Grant McKay of Beaverlodge, they have three children; Donald, James and Ian reside at Lethbridge. Cathleen married George Peat of Lethbridge their children are Erin and George. Marjorie married Frank Archibald of Golden and still reside there with their children; Aaron, Margo, Douglas and Shannon. Robert married Eleonor Griffith of Sexsmith, they live in Chilliwack.

John Wishart passed away in 1957, his wife, Jane in 1969. Mrs. Beatrice Longsdale passed away in 1947, her husband James in 1955. John McKellar passed away in 1950.

GEORGE AND LILA YOUNG

George and Lila Young were both born in the City of Ottawa. They were married in the year, 1911. At the time of their marriage, George was self employed as a hack driver in Ottawa.

The spirit of adventure and a desire for a different mode of life found the Youngs farming in Saskatchewan in 1915. However, wind, drought and dust storms proved too detrimental, and they moved to Grande Prairie in the fall of 1919. They settled on land three miles east of present day City of Grande Prairie.

Both George and Lila were great horsemen. On different occasions they imported heavy draft horses from Ontario and sold or traded them in the Grande Prairie area. They did not limit themselves to strictly draft horses, but raised and ran race horses as well. George also served as the local "horse doctor".



Joyce Hutt and Lila Young.

Lila was an excellent housekeeper and a great cook. Many people can comment on the wonderful food she prepared in her home, cafes, hotels and eventually, the County road camps. Her flavorful homemade soup is still remembered.

In the early 1920's Lila drove her own special driving horse, buggy in the summer time and "jumper" in the winter. In the 1930's she purchased a 1927 Chevy and is well remembered driving through the County or down Richmond Avenue in Grande Prairie.

In 1964 the Youngs moved into Grande Prairie, residing at 9901-97 Avenue, where they lived until age and poor health saw them moved to the Swanhaven Nursing Home.



George Young in Democrat, 1924.



George Young with Hack in 1911 in Ottawa. This was a taxi service.

Lila passed away in 1975 at the age of 86 years.

George passed away the following year at the age of 91.

As long as George was able he had a team in the fair parade. He also hauled water in a water tank. He was a well known and familiar sight as he proudly drove his horses down main street. He never learned to drive a car although his wife owned and drove one.

They hadn't any children of their own. When Slim Hutt's wife died, leaving a family of young children, Mrs. Young spent a lot of time with the children and helped see them through the difficult times of growing up.



George Young in county fair parade, 1960.

FIVE MILE CREEK

The Five Mile School district was organized in 1914 with a population of 83 residents. Trustees were John Blimkie Sr., Wesley Mills Sr., and Henry Fortier. That same year a school was built on S.E.¼ Section 4-72-5-6. The first teacher was Miss Moody, the students attending were Lawrence, Herb, Norman, Francis, and Gertie Blimkie from the Gustaf Blimkie family. Allan and Bill Blimke from John Sr.'s family. The next year they were joined by Marguerite and Wesley Mills. 1917



Five Mile as one room school.

saw a change of trustees when Bill Drynan became chairman. Tom Warden and Wes Mills the other trustees. Children attending and shown in the picture are Marguerite and Wes Mills, Norman, Allan, Herb, Francis, and Gertie Blimke.

Other teachers to teach at this location were Mrs. Todd Ida Dewhirst from Bezanson, Mrs. Garner, Mrs. Bill Whitfield, Marian Morrison, Alice Sutherland. Mrs. Wes Mills and her brother Ray McDermitt taught when needed.



Picture taken at picnic in 1924.



School trustees, Wes Mills Sr., Tom Warden, Wm. Drynan, John Blimke Sr. Students: Marguerite Mills, Norman, Lawrence, Frances, Allan Blimke, Wesley Mills Jr. Taken in 1917.

In 1925 the area south to Bear Creek was taken into the district as there were 25-30 school age children with no school. There wasn't enough in the original boundaries to keep a school open. The school buildings were moved to S.E. 28-71-5-6, which was about the centre of the district. They were jacked up and put on logs by Alex Wishart, then hauled with horses by Joe Tissington. Albert Blimkie, Bill Drynan, Dick Evans, "Slim" Hutt, N. Floener, and others to the new site, where all but the barn stands today.



Gymnastic class, 1935.



School children, 1942.



School children, 1949.

School opened the first Monday in August, 1925. The school year started in August in those days. July and January were holidays.

There was quite a number of Cree Indians living around what was then known as "Jack Pine Lake." (Now Woods Lake.) This gave them an opportunity to go to school. There was a very large class of Grade ones, some sixteen years old. Phyllis Lamb was the first teacher at the new site. May Broad-bridge (later Hutt) the second.

Miss Burke, Miss Creed, Miss Inkster and Ruth Rutherford (who taught for several years). At this time they only taught up to Grade eight. A great deal of credit has to be given to these teachers. There were Xmas programs. In the winter they saw to it that each and every child had their clothes on properly, that their means of transportation whether by saddle horse or sleigh were all put together safely, thus insuring safe home arrival of their charges. They were on the school grounds at recess and noon with their pupils.

In 1933 there became a need for room for higher education facilities as Ethel and Stella Harle, Betty Tissington and Mildred Evans had to go to town school. There wasn't money or facilities for rural children in the town of Grande Prairie at that time, so we went with horse and buggy or sleigh seven miles. In 1934 an addition was built on the school which also accommodated the Twilight and Crystal Creek students. Grades one through 12 were taught. Brian Pearcy was first principal and high school teacher. Gertie Brightwell (later Rooksby) taught the lower grades. Other high school teachers were Walter Kujath, Jack Holmes, and Rene Mellott. Public school teachers were Ross Kitchen, Wilma Robinson, Winnie Willis. The high school closed at the end of the 40-41 school year. Grades 7, 8 and 9 were taught in the small room and the other grades in the old part of the school. Teachers from this time on until centralization took place in 1956 were Florence Smith, Clara Edland, Henry Weibe, Patsy Meraw, Sophie Halwa, Mrs. Marj. McIntyre, Doloris Probst (Blimkie), Mrs. Phylis Stewart, Mae Blom (Kirkpatrick), Mrs. George Wells, Bella Wallace, Mrs. Tracy. The last lot of names may not be in the order they taught and I hope I haven't missed anyone.

FIVE MILE DISTRICT STORIES — TEACHERS

We had one teacher in our school who I am sure stood out in everyone's mind. She ruled her classroom with a big text book which she used on our heads. She swore like a trooper and smoked like one. Sometimes at both ends. In the winter time she taught us from the top of the stove where she sat. On several occasions her skirt caught on fire. She'd run around yelling. Several times she had to have help from her students. I'm sure we wouldn't have grieved too much if more than the skirt had got browned. By the time the school year was over, we were all getting humps in our backs and turned up noses from having our noses to the grindstone.

Many teachers stand out in my mind, but one of the last ones, Henry Wiebe, stands out quite vividly. He used to drive from Grande Prairie to Five Mile with a horse. He also played the banjo while we

boys used to do the janitor work, so after school Mr. Wiebe would head back to Grande Prairie. We would sweep the floors and, of course, play his banjo, which always needed to be tuned and we were happy to do the job for him. Each morning he would play his banjo while we sang, "Oh, Canada."

Well, just about every morning, ker plunk he'd start to play but it was out of tune. By the end of the year he was the fastest banjo tuner in the north.

Another teacher of the more athlete type was Brian Pearcy, 6'4". Brian used to like to ski. Marcel Floener used to tow Brian behind his car on the end of a 100 foot rope, many times Brian went to town this way, 30-40 miles per hour behind the car, but one day something went wrong, there was a ski track on each side of the telephone pole, Brian had a collision with his first telephone pole, reports were the pole was not badly damaged, but Brian received a few good bruises.

4-H

4-H clubs in the area east of Grande Prairie originated nearly 60 years ago.

Where there are livestock clubs there are tours and field days, where everyone takes part in the judging and activities. The leader or a representative from the Department of Agriculture usually gives a talk, which consists of the care, showing and the characteristics to look for when they are buying their animal. There is usually lunch at noon at some of the members homes. The day winds up with a skating party or tobagganing in the winter. Summer weiner roast, ball games, etc.

There are rallies, curling bonspiels, and public speaking, which starts at the Club level where the representative of the club is chosen. The final speak off where a speaker is chosen from all the clubs in the county to compete to get to the top, usually draws a very large attendance, as the speaches are very impressive. Through all of this process of speaking, people qualified such as teachers, business men, etc., volunteer their time as Judges.

From 1958 to sometime in the 60's. Organizations nominated a girl for "Queen of The Fair' contestants "Alice Patterson" and "Lois Girvan" sponsored by the Dairy Club were winners.

In 1961 it was quite evident that 4-H needed a building of their own. Many fund raising projects were under taken by all the clubs in the area. They had quite a large sum of money when the Fair Board started building new buildings at the Fairgrounds. The money was turned over to them and 4-H has use of some of the buildings.

SPORTS

Five Mile district was always known for sports. There was always softball, baseball, and basketball teams. We also played pick up sticks, hide and go seek. In the early winter years we played Fox and Goose and chose up sides for snowball fights. When it was too cold to go out doors we played upset the fruit basket and others. Even played Post Office when the teachers back was turned.

There was also track meets where all schools took part. We had many winning athletes. Our ball teams were winners many times at these meets, the parents and teachers had to provide the transportation. They usually stayed to watch, which gave the children moral support and they tried harder to win.

From 1929-1931 we had a basketball team. Our only opposition was Flying Shot. Both teams had one boy on. Five Miles team was made up of Cecil Lawrance, Helen Unger, Betty Tissington, Lydia Card, Stella Harle and Mildred Evans subbed. Bernard Tissington was the boy on the Flying Shot team. The rest of the players I'm not sure of. We played against one another every week. Ruth Rutherford (our teacher) would take us to Flying Shot one week and Mr. Foy (their teacher) would bring their team back the next. In 1932 we had an all girls team. Uniforms of gold and black were made with the help of Nora Tissington. Lilian Morrow, Ethel and Stella Harle, Betty Tissington, Eileen Rinksley and Mildred Evans played. During the time we had our high school and Mr. Pearcy was principal and high school teacher we took up gymnastics. Pyramids would be made which would touch the school ceiling. We also had an orchestra and put on amateur shows, followed by a dance quite often. The men usually paid 50 cents, ladies brought lunch. This gave us a little cash for our uniforms for our activities and a bit to spare for other needs.

These same years a rink was built on the school grounds. The water was hauled from Jack Pine and Mud Lake with teams, sleighs and tanks, by the older boys and their fathers. Many times the rinks were ruined by a chinook and had to be redone.

OTHER HAPPENINGS

For years we used to have school fairs. Each child would be given seeds to plant in the spring and raise their own garden. In September a fair would be held in a central location. All the schools would participate. Everything was judged and prizes given.

There was always an entertainment committee made up of the parents of the children, to help arrange ways of making money for Xmas presents, candy and other necessary things to keep social activities carrying on in the community.

Nice warm Sundays in the summer time we would plan a picnic at Bear Creek. Usually on N.E. 11-71-5-6. Everyone would take lunch and we'd have a real good time.

One day in the early 40's a small plane was forced to land on the school grounds. There was no damage or injury and the pilot insisted on having his picture taken with the school children.

For 63 years the old Five Mile School has seen many uses from school to church services, from showers to polling station for elections.

In the 1930's Rev. Fisher held church services in the school. In the 1950's Rev. Davidson, and Rev. McKee held services in the school, but with the event of centralization of our school district, community life dropped to a low ebb, however with the work of some dedicated people of the district, the old school still remains at its present site, property of the Five Mile Creek Association.

We have a lonesome spot,
where our old school still stands.
We kept it for community use,
till vandals used their hands.
We used to drive the miles,
through mud and fluffy snow.
To picnics, showers and Christmas time
to see the tree a glow.
At all our gatherings we met,
all talked in gay delight.
Now since centralization,
everything's in town at night.
We miss the community spirit
of which we were so proud.
We miss the winter gaiety and
miss the friendly crowd.
Now for entertainment,
we watch a T.V. show.
But we see no smiling faces,
no friends to say hello.
And when we shut the T.V. off,
we stop and think about.
The days when entertainment,
made us laugh and shout.
Come back community spirit,
knock again upon our door.
Bring back the old rejoicing,
make us happy as before.

FIVE MILE COMMUNITY CLUBS — "DIZZY DANCERS"

We had teenage parties at our school. In those days the legal age was 21 and we had a lot of young people in that age group looking for something to do. So they organized their own club. The parents and the rest of the family were asked to come and participate in the fun. They danced to a record player, played games, etc. On Halloween the girls would dress as boys and the boys as girls. At fair time they had a float in the parade. We had teeners from all over the country. The Kaskelo twins from Sexsmith attended quite often. They were great musicians. There was the odd problem which arose where liquor was brought which was against the law. These were teenagers though, whose parents didn't know where they were and didn't care. The grown ups who were always at these parties were May and Bill Head, Vera and Hunter Ross, Ruby and Ernie (though their children were too young to be teenagers), Allan and Jessie Eskdale, Selma and Ralph Girvan, Jack and Vi Patterson, Mildred and Cecil Lawrance (with some teeners and some younger ones.) Previous to this organization starting up there had been a certain amount of activity at the school. Concerts, and annual picnics with dances ending the big day. In about 1954 we had a program in the old school and a dance afterwards. This was held at Christmas. The young people of the area who were working away from home were there. One lad who had been around the outside world for sometime said after the dance was over. "Boy I've been to dances and parties in different places but I still have to come back to Five Mile for a real good time."

The group of "Dizzy Dancers" finally grew up and went away to work, some married and after three years the club closed down. I always felt that this was one of the most valuable things as far as the teenagers were concerned that happened in our district. We knew what they were doing, joined in the fun, and believe me it was fun! I feel that it is sad that more of this type of thing does not take place. I often think that we would have less problems today if parents were more interested in so called playing with their family, not only in this type of organization but hockey, ball games, 4-H, scouts and guides, etc. I think it really boosts a child's ability and moral to know that mom and dad are interested enough in them to attend their games, achievement days and take part in these things when they are able to.



There was also a ladies' club that met once a month. Pictured are Margaret Blimkie, Christina Fortier, Marie Bayens, Lela Patterson, Dorothea Mansfield, Nora Tissington, Jean Pellerin and Yvonne Kimpe. Several members are missing from the picture.

Clubs

THE GRANDE PRAIRIE 4-H BEEF CLUB

Records show the first meeting of the Grande Prairie 4-H Beef Club was held in the Provincial Building in Grande Prairie on October 23, 1962. There were 17 registered members with Mr. Everett Sheehan as Club Leader and Mr. Jim Melvin as Assistant Leader, under the direction of Mr. Neil Miller of the Department of Agriculture.

Club Executive consisted of President — Alex Lawrance, Secretary — Lois Girvan, Treasurer — Dale Burrows and Club Reporter — Wayne Davies.

On the Adult Advisory Committee were Everett Sheehan, Jim Melvin, Ralph Girvan, Ken Davies, Jim Tissington, Don Boyd, Alf Walters and Percy Rigler.

The objectives of the Club members was to raise a top grade market steer, and of course, to participate actively in all club events.

The first Show and Sale was held in June of 1963 at the Grande Prairie Auction Mart with top honours going to Robert Walters for his Grand Champion calf and Lois Girvan for her Reserve Champion calf.

Efficiency winners that first year were Jean Girvan first, and Lois Girvan second.

Under the same leadership, 1963 saw membership increase to 32. Obviously the club was a success! So much so that in 1964 membership was too large, according to Government Regulations at the time. It was then decided that members north of what is today referred to as the "Mill Road", should form the Clairmont club and those south, the Grande Prairie club. Thus, Mr. Sheehan left the Grande Prairie club to help organize the Clairmont Club, and remained as their Leader for several years. Alex Lawrance became the Grande Prairie Club Leader with Ralph Girvan and Alf Walters as Assistant Leaders. Enrollment in 1964 numbered 19 members.

In 1965 Neil Moon became Club Leader with Alex Lawrance and Mabel Davies as Assistant Leaders. Neil has remained an active and interested leader since that time and currently serves on all three levels of 4-H Council, District, Regional and Provincial. During these years many interested parents have served as Assistant Leaders, changing as new members join the club and senior members leave.

The Achievement Day Show and Sale as well as the Awards Night Banquet have become annual events in the community. The Show and Sale is now held in the Lewis Hawkes Pavilion at the County Fair Grounds, and the Awards Banquet at the Crystal Creek Hall. Both events taking place in early June.

At the time of the club's inception, the 4-H Program was under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture. Later it was transferred to the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation which eventually became known as Recreation, Parks and Wildlife. As of 1976, 4-H is once again located within the Department of Agriculture. Many changes have taken place through all of these transfers, one of them being a stronger emphasis on the Growth and Personal Development aspect of the Program. This is achieved through a variety of summer activities such as camps, exchange trips and seminars to mention but a few. These activities take place at all levels of the 4-H movement beginning at individual clubs and ranging through District, Regional and Provincial levels.

Members of the Grande Prairie 4-H Beef Club have represented their area, as well as the Province, on Award trips to the United States, the eastern provinces and the central provinces of Canada. Many have been involved in exchange trips with other areas within the province of Alberta as well. These trips have proven most rewarding to these young people.

1977 sees clubs throughout the province involved in preparation for various celebrations of the 60th Anniversary of 4-H in Alberta. Their combined effort being to create a lasting Tribute. This in the nature of the construction of a Provincial 4-H Centre where all Alberta members and leaders alike will have a central facility to utilize for camps, seminars, communication and leadership workshops, etc., which enhance personal skills and leadership abilities. Not only for 4-H today, but as well, 4-H tomorrow.

4-H DAIRY

In 1958 a dairy club was formed. Fred Drysdale was leader and Frank Stoll assistant. Board of directors consisted of E. M. Bliss, Raymond Cooke, Jack Patterson and Cecil Lawrance.

The Department of Agriculture brought in Holstein heifer calves from the Edmonton milk sheds for the first three years. There were several freaks in these animals. First year efficiency winner Gordon "Bud" Stoll. Second year efficiency winner was Walter Patterson.

After the third year the members could use their own heifer calves. By this time their first year heifers were in production and they could go into a herd project. There were around thirty members the first five or six years. The number of individual members who were in this club over the years would be large. Some started at the age of twelve and carried on until they were twenty-one, which was the age limit. Each year junior leaders were chosen and these older ones were usually the ones.

In 1963-64 Frank Stoll became the leader and Allan Grant assisted. Frank left the club and Allan became leader assisted by Dick Dool.

The achivement day was always held the second day of the fair. Efficiency winners were chosen by the rating on their project books, co-operation and attendance at their monthly meetings and the best animal at the show. In 1965 Darlene Lawrance and George Grant competed in the Interprovincial 4-H Dairy Show at Red Deer. John Grant and Garth Lawrance went along to carry the Grande Prairie banner. Their calves placed very well in the large groups.

The club continued and was formed in the 1967-68 year. There were only eight members and controversy arose over joining the Wembley or Grande Prairie beef clubs and making a multi-project club. It was decided to close the club and have a reunion to spend their funds. Members and families over the ten years came to the Dimsdale Hall for a turkey supper and dance.

This year, 1977 they have dairy members in the Grande Prairie beef club which has become a multi-project club.

There was always a member or two from the Lawrance family each year of the original club. The C. Gudlaugson family had members in the club all but one year. The new members of 1977 are children of the former 4-H members and leaders.

4-H CLOTHING

In 1957 a sewing club was organized. Mrs. Violet Patterson was leader, Jean Pellerin was her assistant and Laura Patterson also assisted. The first meeting was held at Mrs. Stanley Moore's. Members had to be twelve years of age, they had to have twelve members to make a club. They were called the Grande Prairie Sewing Club.

Later Mrs. Kenefick joined the ladies to help out and so did Betty Welter. Betty has been the leader of the club now for eighteen years. She has given very freely of her time, raising a large family, taking

different positions with the various councils with 4-H. She takes part in fair activities, and is active in other organizations in the city.

They have had both boys and girls in the club learning to sew. The number of members that have belonged to this club is not known. Many a fine seamstress of this age who are now married and do their own sewing learned their trade from these ladies. There was always a large membership in the club. In 1977, it has become a multi-project club as they are taking crafts as well as sewing. They now call themselves the "Stitch Strippers." They have an achievement day where prizes are given on the sewing. As well the members have project books which are judged. Each year an efficiency winner is named, based on the points made on their projects and participation over the year in club activities.

SWINE CLUB

It must be noted that Grande Prairie had a swine club as early as 1921. A. R. Judson was then the district agriculturist. His territory stretched from the Smoky River to west of the Rio Grande. There was approximately twenty members in this club. They came from an area within a radius of fifty miles. Their achievement days were held in one of the livery stables in Grande Prairie.

The pigs were brought in by team and wagon box. Many had to start out very early, in order to be there in time for the show. After the show the pigs were driven a quarter of a mile to the railroad station by the boys, and loaded on boxcars. Can you imagine herding pigs that distance? Before they would get them there, the D.A., and fathers had to join in to help herd the pigs. They would run all over Grande Prairie. No street sweeper and health unit in those days.

Miscellaneous

OLD TIMERS PRAYER

Give us each day our daily bread
And plenty of cowchips to bake 'er
We'll beat the taxes another year
Then let the government take er.

THE BEAR CREEK VALLEY

Bear Creek is the southern boundary of the Five Mile district. It flows out of Bear Lake through Grande Prairie and into the Wapiti River south of the Crystal Creek district.

In the early 1900's this creek and the area south of it was used for different types of purposes. Trail rides were very popular among the young people. Crossing the creek where there were several different places they could cross, they would ride to the top of the hill. Here there was a trail made by the cattle that people in the surrounding area turned out between Bear Creek and the Wapiti, they could ride right to what was called "The mouth of the Wapiti." Most of the fruit that was used in those days grew in abundance in the area. Some people crossed with horses taking two water pails to a horse and always came back with them full. There was also a raft on the creek bank on N.E. 11-71-5-6. One day several families went berry picking. Too many got on the raft but crossed safely



Homesteader's shack in Bear Creek Valley, still stands today, the only one of many which were built in the area. (John McKellar's cabin.)

with a foot or so of water on the raft. One teenager packed a water bucket full of water to the top of the hill before she realized there was water in the pail. She had been so frightened!

The farmers from the area hauled their firewood, logs and posts from here. Different places got different names. One steep hill where most encountered difficulty was called ' Mortemer's Pitch' . There was ' Ice Lake'' which was bottomless. This was where people got their ice for their ice houses and packed it in sawdust for cooling purposes. Also using it to make homemade ice cream which was a very delicious treat.

There were homesteaders in the area who made their living off the land during the depression. Bill Card, Tom Warden, Henry Fortier, Wisharts Longsdale, McKellar and many more.

The creek itself was used for recreation. Swimming and fishing in the summer. Skating and beaver trapping in the winter. As well it was the main water supply for the cattle belonging to the farmers in the area. There are very steep cutbanks on the waters edge of the creek. In these banks are dinosaur bones and fossils. A good deal of Mr. Cochrane's well known collection came from this creek. One dinosaur has been varnished to preserve it and left in the bank. The area now is restricted and no longer can these oddities be removed. It will now remain in it natural state.

The creek is no longer used for recreation. When the dam was built in Grande Prairie the fish were hindered and they didn't go down in the volume they had previously. The trout disappeared and there were only "suckers" left.

Now the sewer lagoon is emptied into the creek every so often. The fish have all died. The Beaver moved up on the banks where there is water from

springs. They have built their dams in these spring to avoid the contaminated water.

Waters which ran clear; in years gone by, waters which carried every species of fish on the North American continent. Now it is a sewage disposal stream for the city of Grande Prairie, it seems ironic that things like this should happen, but I guess that's progress.

JACK PINE LAKE INDIAN BAND

Until about 1930 there was a large population of Indians around Jack Pine Lake, which is a small lake in the Five Mile district, (home of a pair of Trumpeter Swan). There were lots of rats, squirrels and wildlife there and was within walking distance of town. They had large families some of them were the Lenny family, Charlie Joackum, Lexi Campbell, Calious, Belcourts and others. They had homesteaded land in the area. There wasn't any school in the area until 1925. When school was opened there were 25-30 children who came along and at the most there was six white children. Phyllis Lamb our teacher had quite a time with the boys the first few months. By the end of the term they had quieted down and the children all mingled together. Their land has changed hands quite a few times. At the present time Cecil Lawrance owns the Joackum quarter.

DISTINGUISHED CHARACTERS

There were many distinguished characters here in the Five Mile district. There was Howard O'Brien the hunter, who made his living hunting and trapping. Howard would go to town with the team and wagon, the Mrs. perched up beside him, under the seat would be venison and moose which he traded in town. It was said Howard sold meat to the local police.

Then there was George Young, the horse trader. George liked to drive his team up and down main street, many an unwary trader made the mistake of trading a prancing team from Geroge Young only to find next morning he had a real slow poke of a team. The wire whip and dope wore off and the new owner was stuck with one of George Young's favorite tricks.

We not only had distinguished characters in our area but inventors too. I admit Joe Fortier's tobacco and cigars were very strong.



Bucking contest July, 1917, at Grande Prairie sports.

My first recollection of Joe was his making an aeroplane out of orange crates for his son Ed. When we went there and he showed us his apparatus, he was trying to figure out some way in which he could make it move, by propellor or motor. Whether he succeeded I never did see it flying but possibly crashed on the first take off.

Joe needed some witnesses for something pertaining to the title on his homestead. He and neighbor Joe Tissington and Slim Hutt went into town to see to this. Somewhere along the trip they got lost and carried away, coming home drunk. Nothing done about the homestead. They all had to be inventors that day (with excuses).

Joe Fortier was a very comical person. They used to always have a large garden. One year we had an exceptionally wet year and it froze early. He had netted gem potatoes that really did well. He packed in an armful like he would if he was packing sticks of wood.

He really got aggravated with the elevator personnel. He had taken a load of grain to town. It must have been rejected. He always said ' It was pie-balled, snowballed and too tough to buy.''

Kleskun Hill



Family Histories

GEORGE AND FLORENCE BASS — by Florence

George Wesley Bass was born January 11, 1882, at Linwood, Waterloo County, Ontario, where he lived with his parents, three sisters and three brothers until he was in his twenties. He came west to Strome, Alberta, living in that district for some time. Here he met the late John Harris and his family and came over the Edson Trail with them in 1911, driving a team of oxen in the winter over frozen rivers. He stayed with the John Harris family one winter making a trip to Edson for a year's supply of food.

In 1916, he enlisted in the army — Edmonton Regiment, and saw active service in France. For six months he was working with Engineers digging a tunnel under Vimy Ridge. Finally, the tunnel was not used and the men went over the top. George had a slight bullet wound in his back, luckily missing his spine. He was sent to England for attention. The damp and often water-filled trenches brought on rheumatism and after treatment for same in hospitals in England, he was given an honourable discharge in the spring of 1918. He stayed at Yorkton, Saskatchewan with his married sister and family for some time. He came back to work on his homestead, S.E. 31-72-4-W6th, Kleskun Hill, in 1920.

On June 9, 1926, at Yorkton, Saskatchewan, he married Florence Druce of Totteridge, Herts, England. He met her while on leave.

Back on the farm we lived in a three room frame house heated by coal and wood and lighted with coal oil lamps. We had no well, so took a four gallon can to Jim Ismonds for drinking water. For our other uses we saved rain water and melted snow. In the summer a trip by stone-boat was made across the school section to a creek.

We farmed with four horses and grew wheat and oats. We had no cattle. I always had a large garden.

In summer we drove a Model T Ford and put it up on blocks for the winter, and used a sleigh with wagon box.

Entertainment was varied. In the winter we played cards often with neighbors, Jess, Bill, Charlie and Warren Harris and Jim Ismond. We attended pie socials and box socials and dances at Kleskun Hill school. In the summer we often went to Clarimont sports and to picnics.

We never had any disasters to speak of.

In May 1938, our chosen daughter, Evelyn, arrived from Edmonton at the age of ten weeks. We had so much pleasure in raising her, a bright healthy child. I won't forget the surprise shower for her in June, 1938 when neighbors from east and west brought gifts. Among those attending were Mrs. Ashley Thompson and Mrs. Jack Demaine, who helped.

In March of 1943 we left the farm to live in Clairmont. Evelyn started school in 1944. She married Roy Hutchings in April 1958. She has five children, aged thirteen to seventeen and a half years, as of today, April 19, 1976. They live on a farm at Gibbons, Alberta.

George's health was quite bad in the late 1950s and he died of cancer on June 30, 1960.

I still live in Clairmont.

MR. AND MRS. CHARLES BROWN — Charlie and Elizabeth

Mr. and Mrs. Brown came to Canada from England in 1910. They lived at Shellmouth, Saskatchewan, then moved to Edson, Alberta where Mr. Brown worked on the railroad. Mr. and Mrs. Brown ran a stopping place on the Athabaska River in 1915. They came over the Edson Trail to the Kleskun Hill district in 1916. They filed on a homestead and built a log house. They built a lumber house in the late 1940's.

They used oxen and then horses to farm the land. They never had plumbing or electricity. They hauled their drinking water a mile from a well on Kleskun Lake. They had a dam to water the livestock. They mixed farmed grain and livestock. They grew a large garden every year.

They sold their farm to Mr. and Mrs. Frank Harris and retired to Sidney, Vancouver Island, B.C. in the fall of 1946. Mr. Brown died in March 1947. Mrs. Brown passed away in Victoria, B.C. July 9, 1960.

FRANK COREY STORY — by Flora Corey (Leith)

Frank B. Corey was born at Havelock, New Brunswick, Canada, March 12, 1893. He came out to North Vancouver, B.C. when he was 18 years of age. He worked at Mc and Mc's wholesale hardware for awhile. He did not like the inside work and decided to go up to the Peace River country to get a homestead. His mother had died and his father was killed in his own mill at Havelock, N.B. His sister lived in North Vancouver.

I met Frank at the First Baptist Church in North Vancouver and we both went to Sunday School and the Young People's society, there.

He left for Edmonton in the spring of 1912. That summer he bought a good saddle horse and a pack horse and went up the old Edson Trail. It was nearly all muskeg. He had a partner with him. His name was Frank, too. The pack horse broke his leg in the muskeg and they had to shoot him. They had to use the saddle horse to put their belongings on. It was a very hard tiresome trip.

After they arrived at Grande Prairie they looked around there and Frank eventually filed on the homestead S.W. 33-72-4 W6. He wanted land all open and no bush on it, and this was it. There was a creek running through one corner of the quarter section, and it had some nice poplar trees along the creek. He built a fairly good sized cabin of logs. It had two rooms, a good sized living room and a smaller one. It had a sod roof on it, and he chinked the cracks between the logs with a light grey mud, he got from Kleskun Hill near his homestead. He put 3 windows in and it was good and warm, so he thought, but the only stove he had was a small iron cook stove and when it went below zero, 30 degrees to 70 degrees F. below, he nearly froze to death. Frank built a small log barn for his saddle horse. It kept him busy sawing wood to try and keep warm. It was very lonely and he had nothing to read.

There were new arrivals coming in and taking land up around there and they did quite a lot of visiting. The neighbors around there were, Hubert Manning and brother, Thomas Fitzpatrick and his wife and sons, Bill, Paddy, Phil, and Jack, and their daughter Alice. Bill Barnes and his father lived just across the road from them and Ike Boyer next to them.

Harry Carlin, filed on a quarter, just east of the Fitzpatricks. Sandy Morong was near Carlins, also Mr. and Mrs. Alderman. Bertha Julick and her mother and father and brother were neighbors. Others were Mr. and Mrs. Tempest, Mr. and Mrs. Turner (Sr.), Mr. and Mrs. Whalen and family — Alzina, Ed, Pete and Irene. Mr. and Mrs. Herchel Alder were up near to Kleskun Hill. Mr. and Mrs. Cly were about one mile from Frank's place, also Galancy Graham and widow. There were the Barnes and two little girls near the Grahams. Later on there were Hugh and Rowe Thompson. Then west of Frank's place, one mile, were (later) Mr. and Mrs. Al Havalena, Mr. Rankin, Mr. Fred Toole and family, Mr. and Mrs. Andy Murchie and two children, Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Bowsfield and three girls, and Mr. and Mrs. Carl Cotnam.

Joe Lacrosse lived up there too. Mr. and Mrs. Binks had the post office then. Mr. and Mrs. Harris and their family — Bill, Jess and wife, Charlie, Irene, and Warren. Louis Withers was near there, and Mr. and Mrs. Graham and family.

Cecil Waller was near the Harris place, and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Turner, their family and daughter Clara. These are all I knew and remember, and apologize for anybody left out.

Frank sold his thoroughbred saddle horse Daisy and got a team of oxen called King and Dan. In the Grande Prairie paper it said that Frank Corey had sold his Flying Machine for a team of oxen. He ploughed 30 acres that summer to prove up his place to get the Title, and he ploughed some for other neighbors, too.

He went out to North Vancouver one winter to work and then back to Kleskun Hill again. When the three years were up he came down again and worked. Frank

and I were married on October 13, 1916. The railroad had been built then, up to Grande Prairie. We came up soon after that.

Harry Carlin and Alice Fitzpatrick were married and had a little daughter Lucille. She was such a sweet little child and so lively. They were living in Grande Prairie and Harry was working for Crummy Brothers, who had a general store. Frank took me to see them. I stayed at their place for 3 days, while Frank went out to his homestead. Ike Boyers had put the crop in, on our place, on shares. Frank told him not to put the grain in the house as he was married and would be bringing his wife out in a day or two.

We bought a new kitchen range with a water tank on the side, to have warm water, and some other things also. We had bedding, etc., in a trunk, and bought some pretty dishes.

Bill Barnes came into town with his wagon and a team of mules, to take us out to the homestead. When we arrived, the house was nearly full of grain. Oats in the main room, and wheat in the small room. The men shoveled the oats away from near the door and set the stove up. We slept on the oats that night. The next day, we borrowed grain sacks from a neighbor to sack the oats. We borrowed Bill Barnes' team of mules and wagon to go to Aldermans place. He had some furniture for sale. They were going out to Edmonton for awhile to make a grub stake. We bought some furniture, chickens and an old brown cow named Molly.

I packed all the water up a steep bank from the creek for the house and chickens. In winter we had to melt snow for the house and for the cow. But the horses ate snow part of the time. It kept Frank busy sawing wood for the two stoves. Once he was away for the day, and I sawed a good pile up for him. But he said he thought Mr. Cly must have come over and cut it. I had to learn to milk the cow. Good thing she was old and easy to milk.

Havalenas were very good to me and Mrs. Havalena taught me how to make donuts, and gave me pointers on baking bread, parker house rolls, etc. We had our first Christmas at their place. Mr. Havalena shot quite a few prairie chickens and we had some of those roasted and stuffed. Then they came down to our place for New Year's dinner. We had roast pork with dressing and dried apple sauce, vegetables, roasted the potatoes peeled whole in with the roast. My Mother sent some of her good Christmas cake and pudding up from North Vancouver. We played cards in the evenings. I learned to play poker, with matches and beans, and other small card games too.

We had a few dances at the East Kleskun school house and at some houses. Once in awhile, we had a big one at the Club Hall. We always had a good time. The Whalens were the only ones who had sleigh bells on their sleigh, so we always knew who was coming to visit when we heard the bells. The bells sounded so nice and we all would pile in their sleigh to go to the dances at the Club Hall. The northern lights looked beautiful in the clear cold nights. The temperature was 30 to 70 degrees below zero, Fahrenheit, most of the winter and we had lots of snow.

We thought the spring would never come. The chickens' combs froze, but they still lived through it. We usually had one Chinook in the winter that took the snow off in a day. Then it would turn cold and snow again. The only pleasure we had was visiting with the neighbors. In the spring when the snow went off, everything started to get green and was very pretty. I set six of the hens that got broody and had very good luck with the little chicks.

Frank was kept busy, getting the crop in and I put a garden in. But our soil was gumbo and hard to work up. It was very good for wheat.

We got no. 1 northern for it. Frank rented some land to put oats in, as it did better on a softer darker soil. This place was 5 miles east of us, and he went down there with our 3 horses to put the oats in, and stayed for a few days. I did not have enough bread baked for him to do that long, when he left. So I said I would bake a batch and walk down with it. Early the next morning I stopped at Fitzpatricks on the way down to say hello to them. I thought I knew where the road was, but had only seen it in the winter time. I went on a path which looked like a road. It was all bush and trees down there. I got lost, and kept going around in circles, and called, but no answer. It was getting hot and the mosquitoes were in swarms, and me carrying this big batch of bread. I was just about giving up in despair when I came to part of an old fence. I followed it along and later came to a house, and some men working on the roof. One was down on the ground, and I asked him if he knew where Morong's place was. He said, I can't explain how to get there, but it is about 3 miles. I will take you over. He was a white man but the others were Indians. We walked over and I followed behind on a little path. He knew my husband and heard he was married. At last we arrived there, and this fellow started to scold Frank for bringing a woman up there and letting her get lost in the bush. Frank was just getting ready to come home, as one of the horses had hurt his foot. We all had something to eat and we left for home but I got a ride back with the bread.

I was baking bread for Mr. Barnes and Bill that spring, summer and fall. Mr. Barnes gave us some nice lettuce out of his garden, and some home-smoked bacon. He had a good garden soil and nice vegetables.

We kept our milk in milk cans in the creek to keep it cool. Frank made a meat safe with a wired covered door on it to let the air in. He nailed it up quite high in a tree, so we could reach it. We kept our butter in the creek too. I had to learn to do a lot of things up there. It was hard, with me coming from a city, but I liked making the butter, with a dash churn. It was nice to have the butter milk to drink and for cooking.

I canned saskatoon and blueberries. First canning I ever did, and the saskatoon berries fermented. I poured the juice into a big bottle. Joe LaCrosse, our neighbor was helping Frank to build a new log barn. He was very good with an axe, on the logs. We told him about the fermented juice, so he took a little out in a small red lard pail and kept coming in to get it refilled. It was a hot day. Then he said to Frank "I can't work up on the top of the barn anymore today, can't handle the axe. I'm going home" He had too much of the fermented juice. I never heard the end of that.

Mr. and Mrs. Ashley Thompson and their son Nile were living with Ashley's father west of Grande

Prairie. Ashley filed on a quarter section near Kleskun Hill. He and his brother came out and built a cabin on it. Then they came out in the spring, summer and fall and did work on the place and fixed it up. It was nice to have Mrs. Thompson so close and visit back and forth, a little, when we were not too busy.

Harry and Alice Carlin were still living in Grande Prairie, but were thinking of coming out to their homestead to live again.

My chickens were doing fine. Mr. Havalena gave us a small pig that spring. It and the chickens got the extra skim milk, and it sure grew.

We had a nice golden, collie dog given to us. When I went picking berries, the dog and pig both followed me and picked them, too. The pig ate a lot of saskatoons.

We had a fair crop of wheat on our place and good oats on the rented place. I did the cooking for the threshers, myself and it was quite an experience.

Mr. Carlin was going out to Edmonton on some business, and Alice wanted to come in and stay with her for a week. I did some sewing while I was in there, on her machine. While I was in there, our cow got sick and stopped milking. A wildcat, something like a small cougar, got in and gradually ate all my youngest chickens, while Frank was working on the land. Then our dog tried to get him one day. Frank shot the cat and got four dollars for the pelt.

On December 7, Frank took me into Grande Prairie and on December 9, our first baby was born. Dr. Higbee was my doctor and she was a very good one, and had all the country to look after. We named our son, Arthur Le Baron Cory. It was fifty below zero Fahrenheit, at the time, and when I went home they put hot bricks in the sleigh box and lots of blankets and fixed up a kind of a tent over the baby and me. Our old neighbor, Mr. Cly, stayed at our place and kept the fires going for three days and looked after the cow.

Cecil Waller and Irene Harris got married and also Phil Fitzpatrick and Alzina Whalen. Phil built a new house on his quarter section near his parents place. Mr. Whalen passed away later on.

Joe LaCrosse had butchered our pig for us, that fall. We also had a steer butchered. It was so cold, that the meat was frozen all winter, and we sawed some off as we wanted it.

In the spring, Jack Fitzpatrick and his wife, Mabel, moved out from Grande Prairie to their homestead, near Carlins. He had been working at the lumber yard in town. They had a baby boy, Claude, who was six months older than Arthur.

Frank had done quite a bit of breaking on the land, so the next crop was a lot bigger. It looked as if it was going to be a bumper crop. We had some good rain in June. With the long days and short nights in the summer, we could just see the grain grow. We had all wheat on our place and oats and a little wheat on Mr. Cly's place. The new teacher, Miss McColm, wanted to board with us, as we were so close to the school. So we took her for the summer and fall. The school was open all summer and closed at Christmas for two months.

The mosquitoes were so bad. They were just in clouds. We kept a smudge burning in front of the house all the time and also in front of the barn. They would work in through the logs. We smudged the house out before we went to bed, and they were in at 4 o'clock in the morning again. The teacher put newspaper inside her stockings to protect her legs when she walked to school. Wild strawberries were plentiful that year. One night we had a bad frost, all over the country and even down to the other prairies, around Winnipeg, etc.

We were expecting a visit from my mother and father. Frank had bought a thoroughbred trotter, from a friend of ours from North Vancouver. He had filed on a homestead at Beaverlodge, but he let it go and we got this horse, named Frank. It was a racer in Vancouver. Frank (my husband) traded our old buggy on a new one, so my mother and father would be more comfortable coming out to our homestead. My father was "chief of police" in North Vancouver, and mother was not used to this kind of life. When they landed at our place, mother was horrified at the look of the house, but she got used to it. They were only going to stay for a week. They wanted to see the baby very bad. Arthur was six months old then and they made a big fuss over him too. Frank had to sleep out in the grainery, and was nearly eaten alive by mosquitoes.

We thought at first our wheat was frozen, as everybody elses grain was, but it was not. The way the sun shone on our place in the morning, it gradually thawed out. We had a bumper crop, which threshed out to 40 bushels of no. 1 Northern wheat to the acre.

After my folks had gone home, we got back to normal again. Frank had to cut hay down at Kleskun Lake, and stack it there, for the winter. Nearly all the neighbors cut their hay, there. They got permits to do it.

In the fall Mrs. Charlie Brown said she would board the teacher. It was 3 miles to the school from their place, so the teacher borrowed a pony to ride.

We were all ready to have the threshers come to our place. I peeled a lot of potatoes and vegetables and had them in a clean washtub. Irene and Cecil Waller came down, and she helped me some. I had twelve lemon pies made. The threshers were to come the next morning. When we woke up there was six inches of snow, all over the stooks of grain and everywhere. Frank hired some of the neighbors, with sleighs and wagons, to help. They had to shake all the snow off the stooks, then stack them. Just before Christmas, Paddy Fitzpatrick and the crew, came and threshed it. We were surprised to get 40 bushels to the acre. Frank was busy hauling grain to town that winter. It was dark when he left our place and dark when he got home. One night when he got home, our big bay horses nose was bleeding from the cold.

We had a nice Christmas that year and had Mr. and Mrs. Brown, Mr. Cly and Mr. Barnes over for dinner. We had turkey and all the trimmings; Christmas cake and pudding, Jap oranges, nuts and candy, and cigars. I had the table set nicely, with a white linen cloth, my silver teas set and sterling silver knives and forks, etc., which were some of our wedding presents. Then on New Year's day, we were invited to Murchies place and had a good dinner and a dance after.

The flu was bad that winter and the teacher closed the school down and went into Grande Prairie to help to nurse the sick. Carlins had a new baby. A boy this time, named Gerald. He was a sweet nice looking

child. Bill Fitzpatrick and Mae got married and were living near Bill's parents. Later on they had a baby, a pretty little girl.

We had a fair crop this next year, and on December 14, our second son, Ernest Talmage Corey, was born (on my birthday). It was 30 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, and about four feet of snow. I had planned on going into the hospital at Grande Prairie, but the baby came 2 weeks before we planned. Frank went for Mrs. Fitzpatrick, senior, to help deliver our baby. Everything went O.K. Mrs. Fitzpatrick stayed 3 days and Mrs. Wahlen came up for 3 days. We had a girl from Clairmont to help with the house work for a while.

We went to Havalena's for a visit. It was cold as usual. We had a new cutter then, and was nice going out in it. When we were going home, I said to Frank, would be nice if someone had a fire going to warm the house up. When we got nearer to the house, we could see a light in the window. We could not believe it at first. Some-one opened the door, when we got to the house, and it was Ashley Thompson. He had cooked himself a meal. We were so glad to have the house nice and warm.

Ashley had been wanting to buy our place. One reason was that we grew No. 1 northern wheat on it and it did not get frozen. Frank had always said, he would not sell, unless he got $4000.00 cash for the quarter section. Ashley came out to tell him, he could raise the money. So the deal went through. We sold our horses and everything. Ernest was 4 months old when we left there, in middle of April. We stayed at Waller's place for 3 days, waiting for the train to get in. It was late, so much snow.

We had an awful trip down to Edmonton. I was train sick all the way, and so was Arthur. Ernest cried most of the time. When we arrived at Edmonton, we stayed there for 3 days at the hotel, getting rested up. I bought a new coat and hat. Then we left for North Vancouver. Ashley Thompson passed away, about nine and a half years ago. Mrs. Thompson is still living at their home in Ladner, B.C. Mrs. Thompson and I talk on the phone quite often. My husband Frank, passed away at Haney, B.C. about 14½ years ago. My two sons grew up to be strong, healthy good looking men, and have done very well for themselves. They are both married and the youngest one has two sons.

I was a widow for two years, when I married again to John K. Leith. Now I am a widow again. But have fairly good health. I live in an apartment in Vancouver, B.C.

Harry and Alice Carlin are in a rest home out at Steveston, B.C. I was out to see them last week. Cecil and Irene Waller passed away a few years ago.

PHILIP FITZPATRICK

Due to the high price of land in Litchfield, Minnesota, Phil, at the age of nineteen, left his birthplace in the spring of 1913. He travelled by rail, together with his parents, Thomas and Mary Fitzpatrick, and sister Alice, to Edson, to be met by brothers, Jack and Bill. Another brother, Pat, was working in the area, with the railroad, at this time.

With six horses, four cows, two dozen chickens and two wagons loaded with furniture and food, they began their trek over the Edson trail. Much of the distance was traveled on foot, chasing the cows. After seventeen days on the trail, they arrived on the homesteads at Kleskun Hill. These had been previously filed on for them by brothers, Jack and Pat. Thomas was on N.W. 35-72-4 W6th, Phil on N.E. 34-72-4 W6th. During the winter, a second trip was made to Edson to pick up farm equipment which had been left behind.



Phil Fitzpatrick and son Tom with the first calf born in new barn, 1944.

Phil's father passed away in 1922. His mother moved to Grande Prairie in 1929, where she resided until her death in 1936.

On June 11th, 1917, he married Alzina Whalen. Together, they had seven children, three of which died as children.

Phil and Alzinas' four remaining children are: Thomas, farming at Kleskun Hill, Phyllis (Mrs. Dale Thompson) of Bezanson, Elaine (Mrs. I. O. Stephens) of Grande Prairie and Dennis of Edmonton.

Phil and Alzina farmed on the north side of Kleskun Hill, until 1961, when they semi-retired to Grande Prairie. Alzina passed away in 1962 at the age of 62 years. During her life, she was active in community affairs, playing the piano for dances and the organ at Sunday Mass. She was president of the local C.W.L., as well as serving a term as Diocesan president.

Phil continued to farm, with the help of his son, until 1973.

In July 1976, at the age of 83 years, Phil was awarded the 'Pioneer of the Year' award, at which time he still maintained his own home in Grande Prairie.

THOMAS FITZPATRICK STORY

I was born on my father's homestead in 1921 and have resided in the Kleskun Hill district ever since. My parents, Phil and Alzina Fitzpatrick, raised my two sisters, brother and myself on this farm. We received our education at the Kleskun Hill school. We had four miles to go to school, and many times in the winter we had to miss a lot of days. The most of the time we rode horse back, but we had to walk, at seeding time when Dad needed all the horses.

Most of our entertainment was school picnics, parties and lots of dances. I think probably our closest long time neighbors and school friends were: the Boyers, Delaneys, Thompsons, Harrises, Murchies, and Withers, but many more came and went in the last fifty-five years, that were very close.

There were many, many difficult times, but we also had a lot of fun.

As I grew up, I started farming with Dad, hauling grain with the horses to Clairmont, getting out



Cousins Tom and Vern Fitzpatrick logging in Gordondale, 1946.

firewood and logs for lumber and buildings and hauling feed for livestock. Everyone else in the district was doing the same thing, and helping someone else if they needed it. People seemed to be pretty happy. I can't remember ever seeing anybody bored.



Jim, Barb, Helen, Tom Fitzpatrick, and Elaine and Dave Berg, April 1976.

In 1949, I married Helen Tomshak of Clairmont. We settled down on the S.W. 2-73-4-W6. We bought the west half of 2-73-4-W6 from Alvin and Jessie Delaney, and we are still here.

We raised two children, a boy and a girl. Jimmy married Barbara McDonald and lives in Grande Prairie. Elaine married Dave Berg and they live in High Prairie. They got all their education in Sexsmith.

My dad and mother's home place is now owned by Wes and Fran Penner who came here from Ontario a year ago. We still own and farm N.W. 35-72-4-W6, which was Grandma and Grandpa Thomas Fitzpatrick's homestead. The old log house that they and their sons built in 1913, still stands today.

MR. AND MRS. ABRAHAM ERNEST GREENWOOD — Ernest and Isabella

Mr. and Mrs. Greenwood were born at Halifax, Yorkshire, England in 1875. They were married in 1900. Their son Norman was born in 1906. They came to Canada in March, 1911 and lived at Wronton, Saskatchewan for two years, following which they moved to Edson, Alberta, where Mr. Greenwood worked on the railroad. They came to Kleskun Hill in 1918 and filed on a homestead. Their homestead was partly on Kleskun Lake.



Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Greenwood.

They had a log house with parts built out of lumber. Their barns were all built of logs. They hauled their water half a mile from a well and had a dam on a creek to water their livestock. They mixed farmed. They grew grains and had cattle and pigs. They used oxen first and then horses to farm the land.

Coal oil lamps and then gas lamps were used for lights. They used wood and coal stoves for cooking and heating.

Mr. Greenwood played the violin and sometimes played at school dances.

Mr. Greenwood died December 2nd, 1943. Mrs. Greenwood died November 26, 1946.

MR. AND MRS. NORMAN GREENWOOD — Norman and Mary

Norman Greenwood was born in Halifax, Yorkshire, England in 1906. He came to Canada with his parents in 1911. He came to the Kleskun Hill dis-

trict in 1918. He attended school at the Kleskun Hill school. He married Mary Kiddine who was born at Daysland, Alberta in 1908. They had four children. Three children attended Kleskun Hill school between 1937 and 1946. (Margaret, Albert, and Norman). They rode horseback to school.



Mr. and Mrs. J. Bousfield, Isabella and Ernest Greenwood, and son Norman. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Brown, taken in Edson.

Their farm was partly on Kleskun Lake. The family hauled their water in barrels on a stoneboat, from neighboring wells. The stoneboat was pulled by a team of horses. They lit their home with coal oil lamps, and later gasoline lanterns. They used wood and coal stoves for cooking and heating. They never had plumbing or electricity on the farm. Mixed farming was their occupation. They raised grain and kept livestock, and always had a large garden each year. Chickens, geese, and turkeys also were always plentiful.

Entertainment was usually a whist drive or dance at the school in winter or playing cards with neighbours who dropped in. In the summer it was sports days, rodeos and picnics. Norman played the violin at many of the community dances.

Norman and Mary and family moved to White Rock, B.C. in 1947. They later sold their farm to Stanley Kosik.

Norman and Mary are retired and live in Chilliwack, B.C. Their three daughters, Margaret, Norma, and Marie are married and live in Surrey, B.C. Their son Albert lives in Langley, B.C. They have six grandchildren.

FRANK AND LINDA HARRIS — by Frank Harris

We were both born in 1899, in Somerset, England, and immigrated to Canada in 1927. Traveling was much slower in those days. It took us two weeks from the time we left home to get to Clairmont. We arrived in Edmonton on a Friday night and the train had just left for the Peace River Country. We had to wait over until Tuesday for the next train, as there were only two trains a week at that time. My uncle, John Harris, came to the station to meet us with a team and wagon. I'll never forget the eight mile trip to his farm in a wagon on those roads! I thought this must be the end of the world because I had never seen dirt roads before



Mr. and Mrs. Frank Harris at home, 1975.

that day. Later, when I learned of the trials of the brave pioneers who ventured in over the Edson Trail, I wondered what I had to kick about.

My uncle, John Harris, soon after leaving school, went to Wales to work in the coal mines. From there, he went to sea as a stoker on a freighter and travelled quite a bit around the world. One time when they docked in New York, he left the ship and never went back and that was the last we, in England, heard of him for forty years. During the first world war his son, Charlie, joined the Canadian army and was coming to England, so Uncle John said to him, "I should have some relations in a place called Curry River in Somerset. Go and look them up." Sure enough Charlie found us, and that was the first news we heard of my uncle in all that time. To make a long story short, that was the connection of us coming to Canada and I'll never regret it.

My uncle filed on land two miles north and six miles east of Clairmont and in the meantime, bought more land here and there. I worked for him until 1933, when I started up on my own. My uncle had a half section three miles east of his home place — the old Cly farm — N.W. 27-72-4 W6th and S.W. 34-72-4 W6th. He gave me one quarter and I bought the other one from him (on time of course.) The house on the place was built of logs, so I can say I lived in a log shack. I lathed and stuccoed the outside, which made it much warmer. No drinking water was on the place. I hauled water from my neighbor, Ashley Thompson, who said, "You can have all the water you want and when you want it." That is the kind of man he was, a very good neighbor. I would also like to mention that the Fitzpatricks, Louis Withers, Murchies, Boyers, Delaneys, and others, were all good neighbors.

We have one daughter, Joyce, who went to school at Kleskun Hill. I felt sorry for her going to school in winter on horse back, and sometimes it was pretty cold and snow up to the pony's belly. From the Kleskun Hill school, she went to Business College in Grande Prairie. She is now married and has two children; Darrell, age seventeen and Sandra six years of age.

Her husband, Errol Blimke, comes from a long line of Blimkes, who are very well known in the area.

I served on our local school board for a number of years, and was also secretary for a while, until the county took over. It was in September, 1946, that I bought the Charlie Brown farm, the N.E. 4-73-4 W6th, with a little better soil and better to get out from in the winter.

I'd like to put in a few words about my good wife, who was always a hard worker. She used to can a lot of meat and fruit, raise chickens, grow a big garden, and if I was late getting home at any time, the livestock were fed too.

We retired in 1971 and came to Grande Prairie to live. We rented the farm for a couple of years and then finally sold it.

I'd like to tell the story about the time I got scared. It was in the middle of a very dark night when the dog woke us up. I could tell by his bark that it was something out of the ordinary so I said to the wife, "I'd better get up and see what the trouble is." I got the flash light, which I found wasn't much use to me because the batteries were just about worn out. Well, anyway I went out and the big mistake I made was that I shut the door behind me. Although it was a dark night, I could see a black object there in front of me and coming closer. I put my hand behind me to try and find the door knob. I wanted to get back into the house, but do you think I could find it. No! I was afraid to take my eyes off this object, but with my arm held out straight, I got a wee light from the flashlight and what I saw was a billy goat with horns four feet long.

Then there was another time — it was a dark night too, and the dog was raising heck out there, so I got up and opened the door. The dog nearly knocked me down to get into the house. So I said, "O.K. Buster", that was the dog's name, "if it's no place for you outside, it's no place for me either." So I slammed the door and went back to bed. Call me chicken if you like, I don't care.

DENNIS AND HILARY HORDICHUK

We are relatively new to the Kleskun Hill area. We bought the farm and moved here in the summer of 1973.

This farm was homesteaded by Charlie Brown, then bought by Frank Harris.

Dennis was raised in Saskatchewan and I was brought up on a farm near Grande Prairie. We have two children, Shauna and Kevin.

The farm is primarily grain, but we also run a small herd of registered Jerseys and some beef cattle.

KIDDINE — BARBARA AND HARRY

Harry came to the area from Camrose in 1955 to farm the Paschetag farm for his sister. In 1957, he married Barbara Shermak and brought his bride to the Peace Country.

They bought the Andy Murchie farm in 1959 and moved on to it in the spring of 1960 to begin farming for themselves. They still farm the half. After living in the original house for many years, a new home was built. Both houses were open to many community social functions.

In 1959 their first daughter Bridget arrived, then another daughter Leona joined them in 1961. Their only son Rodney was born in 1962, with two more daughters following. Yvonne in 1964 and Allison in 1970.

The children are receiving their education in Sexsmith at St. Mary's R.C.S. School till grade 9, then finishing at Sexsmith Public High School. At the present time Bridget is enrolled at the Grande Prairie Regional College.

JOE LA CROSSE — as recalled by a neighbor

Joe was raised in Quebec and spent some time working in the bush in the southern states before coming to homestead in Kleskun Hill. In 1913, he filed on S.W. 32-72-4 W6th and made it his permanent home. He stayed with it through thick and thin till old age forced him to give it up. A neighbor recalls Joe telling how he, and a friend, one of the Reid brothers, drove a team of oxen to the Grande Prairie Sports one summer and he was to bring back a little lumber for the roof on his shack. They were able to find a pasture for the oxen for three days, near town. They took it for granted that the pasture had a good water supply. On the third day, then they started back for home, the oxen couldn't be kept on the trail as they neared Deep Creek. The team smelled the water and made a dive for the creek and drank and drank 'till the men were afraid the animals would burst. After unloading the lumber, and getting the wagon back on the trail and reloading the lumber, they continued on their slow journey home. Joe operated a trapline south-east of Grande Prairie. He used to travel by sleigh and dogteam in winter. He built a raft to cross the river in the spring. His lead dog, Ranger, now and then, would leave the cabin in the evenings. One night the wolves devoured Ranger, and Joe found only the tip of the tail of his lead dog, along the trail next day.

Once in the winter, Joe was coming home with his dog team. Just northeast of Grande Prairie he met a farmer with a big load of grain and a four-up (4 horse team). The horses panicked at the sight of the dog team, so Joe hurried the dogs over to the fence. Even so, the load was close to upsetting.

Another time a coyote was in a trap and it looked to Joe like it was dead. When he reached down the coyote grabbed his hand and chewed it and wouldn't let go. It could have had a bad ending if he wouldn't have managed to get his knife out of his pocket. The hand was swollen with a bad color a long time.

It was very easy to freeze the feet on a trap line and Joe froze a big toe and couldn't wear a shoe for a long while, He used spruce gum for salve. Later he went to town and met his old friend Dr. O'Brien on the street. Doctor wanted him in his office to have a look at the toe. It was coming along fine.

One time after his horses had finished for a straw pile he pulled the granary out and set fire to clean up the bottom that was left. It was a dry early spring day and very windy. Everything was alright when he went to bed but the burned straw bottom started smoking again in the night and when Joe came out to check the other granaries and straw piles in the morning, he found only the end of the skids were left. The stacks were in line with each other and the prevailing winds

had carried hot ashes one hundred and twenty rods and set them on fire. He sold the farm to Rudy Croken. Edward Kosik is the present owner. Joe retired to Grande Prairie and bought a small acreage with a shack on it at Moberly Lake, B.C. One day he was found dead in the shack out there. He was so much appreciated for his good and kind nature; he was honest in all his ways and dealings with his fellow men.

IRV AND BONNIE MACKLIN

Irv and Bonnie Macklin with two children — Deryle and Brent — moved to Kleskun Hill from I. V. Macklin's farm on the outskirts of Grande Prairie, in September, 1966. Babysitting service was great as Bonnie's parents lived only one half mile away, as the crow flies.

An old one-and-half storey house purchased from Adam Grotkowski had been moved onto the location earlier that summer. The farming operation consisted of grain and beef, in partnership with brother Art, and some land clearing at our homesteads north of Crooked Creek. In 1968 our third boy Wade was born and in December of the same year we started a dairy operation. The dairy was a transferral of a herd operated for fifty continuous years by Irv's father. During the next few years the dairy herd developed from 35 to 60 milk cows; from grade to some registered cattle. Kleskun Holsteins were starting to appear in herds around the Peace River country. At times, 9 men were employed on the farms, which spread from the outskirts of Grande Prairie, over 70 miles, to the Puswaska homesteads. Finally, in 1971, our first daughter Tanya was born and in 1972 our fifth child Royce. In 1972 Art married, the partnership dissolved and Art moved to the homestead. In 1973 we built a new house where we are presently living, having gotten good use out of our original "26' x 26' er". Our dairy, along with our milking herd and some calves, was totally destroyed by fire in April 1974. Cattle prices were depressed and still are — so to date some of the best grazing on the hard, dry grass hills, and good facilities including shelters, waterers and cement pads remain unused.

MAYER — BENJAMIN AND EMMA

Originally from Leader, Sask. Dad, Mother and I moved to Medicine Hat in 1920, where Dad worked in the Medalta Potteries for 2 or 3 years. Victor was born in Medicine Hat. Being a farm boy, Dad decided he liked farming better than working in the Potteries, so in 1924 the folks moved to Acme, Alberta and Irvine was born there. Due to drought conditions and dust storms, no money was made farming and times were very grim.

Dad heard about the Peace River country — especially Sexsmith, from a friend, and in the spring of 1927, Dad loaded his life's gatherings into a box car at Three Hills (nearest railway at the time) and was on his way to Sexsmith. Mother and we three children stayed at our grandparents place in Calgary till Dad sent for us. After many days on the railroad, Dad finally arrived at Sexsmith. There he heard that he could rent the Charlie Cook place north west of the town, and immediately made arrangements to move out and get settled. Two weeks later, Mother and we three children arrived by train and Dad was there to take us to our new home. The trip was made by wagon and horses. There was a dug well on the farm and it supplied us with ample water. The house was heated by a wood burning cook stove and an air tight heater. My brother Victor and I attended the North Sexsmith school, which was a one room log building. Coal oil lamps were our source of light for several years. To help bring in extra money, Dad cut and sold cordwood, and the school teacher roomed and boarded at our place. His name was Gordon Stewart and he later married Violet Peterson of North-East Sexsmith.

In 1930, Dad rented the Bill Shannon farm on the outskirts of Sexsmith and that was our home for the next several years. As well as farming, Dad also set up many binders for Mr. Shannon, who had the Massey Harris Agency. Victor, Irvine and I went to school in Sexsmith, and it had two rooms, if I remember correctly. There was no dairy in town at the time, and Mother sold milk and cream to bring in extra money. The youngest brother Floyd was born there in 1937.

Dad was still looking for land to buy, and in 1938 he bought a farm on Kleskun Hill, which to-day Floyd owns and farms. The boys attended Kleskun Hill school, and some of the happy times I remember were the Box Socials, dances and Christmas concerts. Also, by now, Dad had purchased a second hand Model T Ford car, and we graduated from coal oil lamps to gas lamps and lanterns.

As times got better, Dad added more land to his holdings and he, with Floyd's assistance, farmed there until the time of Dad's death in the spring of 1965. Mother passed away in the fall of 1970. Victor and family live in Grande Prairie, Irvine and family live at Prince George, B.C. Floyd and family live on the home place and I Evaline Thompson and family live at Whitecourt, Alberta.

— Compiled by daughter Evaline Thompson
P.O. Box 149, Whitecourt, Alberta, T0E 2L0
February 20, 1977

WILLAIM AND DORIS McCURDY

William McCurdy better known as "Mac" was born in Belfast, Ireland on July 24, 1900. After serving in the Imperial Army, during World War I, he came to Canada. In 1928 Mac arrived in the Peace River country with a water well drilling rig. Here he met Doris Murchie, daughter of Andrew and Alice Murchie.

Doris was born in Edson, Alberta March 21, 1914. In the spring of 1915, the Murchie family travelled over the Edson Trail to a homestead in the Kleskun Hill area. Doris attended the Kleskun Hill school.

On April 4, 1935, Mac and Doris were married, and took up farming in the district. There were three children born to them, Robert, July 4, 1936, Brian, April 18, 1939 and Jeanette, September 22, 1941.

During World War II, Mac joined the Canadian Army and moved his family to Grande Prairie. Mac was on the staff at the basic training centre there. The family remained in Grande Prairie, where the children attended school. Mac passed away Jan. 1960.

Bob married Carol Schmause of Prince George;

they have three children — Kathleen, Colleen, and Shawn. They live at Edson.

Brian married Eleanor Wales; they also have three children, Terry, Brent, and Tracey and they live in Grande Prairie.

Jeanette lives at home and works in Grande Prairie.

ALEX AND DELVA MURCHIE — by Delva Murchie

Alex Murchie was born in 1910 in Russell, Manitoba, son of Andrew and Alice (Bousfield) Murchie. At the age of one, his parents moved to Edson, and in 1915 came over the Edson Trail, to settle on a homestead in The Kleskun Hill Area, east of Clairmont.

Here Alex grew up, attending Keskun Hill school and helping his Dad farm.

In November 1934, he married Delva Tolley, who came from Southern Alberta, to teach in The Kleskun Hill School.

For several years we farmed and lived in The Kleskun Hill Area on S.E. 9-73-4-W6, land which we still own. During the Depression years we milked cows, made butter and sold it for 15 cents a pound. We also purchased a few mink, built pens and went into "fur farming". During The Second World War the price of mink dropped very low. As mink were a lot of work, we sold them and went out of the business.

In 1940 we rented school land, one half section, just east of Clairmont, and moved our house into there. Later we bought this land.

We have five children, three boys and two girls. Allan, who works with B.C. Hydro, and lives in Dawson Creek. He has two children. Jim, who passed away in 1965. Don, who is an electrician, lives in Kelowna, B.C. He has four children. Marilynn and her husband Ron Meldrum live in Edmonton. They have three children. Lexie and Brian Thoreson live in Sexsmith. They have two little boys. We also have a foster child in The Philippines, a little girl, Evelyn Joaquin.

In 1950 our crop was completely hailed out. The Peace River Area was in need of teachers so I went back to teaching. I taught in Clairmont, Grande Prairie, Worsley, Teepee Creek, and then Harry Balfour for eighteen years.

Alex continued to farm and raise sheep and cattle.



Alex, Delva Murchie and family, 1962. Back row: Lexie, Don, Eileen and Allan, Jim. Front: Betsy, Dwayne and Marilyn Jr., Alex, Delva, Marilyn.

In 1974 I retired from teaching. Alex has now rented his farm land as he has glaucoma and the dust bothers his eyes. He still looks after his livestock, and we intend to live in our new home which we built on the east end of our Clairmont land, do a bit of travelling, and just generally enjoy life.

ANDREW AND ALICE MURCHIE — by Delva Murchie

Andrew Murchie was born in Ayrshire, Scotland in 1880, son of Alexander and Jane Dykes Murchie. He grew up on a farm called Bogside near Ayr, close to the cottage of Robert Burns.

At the age of twenty-six he came to Canada and went to work on the S.L. Head Farm at Russell, Manitoba. Here he met and married Alice Bousfield, from Burnley, England, on June 23, 1909. Here their son Alex was born in December 1910.

From Russell the Murchies moved to Edson, Alberta where Andy worked on the railroad for a number of years. A daughter Doris was born there.

In the spring of 1915 they travelled over The Edson Trail to Grande Prairie. They spent several days and nights on the way, using stopping places at night where bedding was spread on the floors and everyone slept there.

When the Smoky River was reached the ice was just breaking up. It was risky to cross but the drivers decided to try it. Tom Bousfield took the lead. He drove into the river with his four-up and sleigh. Big cakes of ice were coming down the river. The horses had to swim and the sleigh floated. It was very dangerous as one of those pieces of ice might strike a horse and break its leg or perhaps jamb into the sleigh box and tip it over. He didn't try to go straight across the river but let the horses and sleigh go with the current and drifting cakes of ice. They headed down the river and landed on an island part way across. After resting, they made it safely to the other side.

The Murchies took a homestead ten miles east of Clairmont in The Kleskun Hill Area. Here a daughter Jean was born. They farmed there until 1960 and took an active part in community affairs.

Many cold hard trips were made by team and sleigh into Clairmont when a load of grain was to be sold, or a load of coal or groceries brought back to the farm.



Andrew and Alice Murchie.

Farming operations were done with horses for many years. This meant many hours of long hard work. During The Depression Years the prices received for farm products didn't cover the cost of production.

In 1960 The Murchies retired to Grande Prairie. They sold their farm to Harry and Barbara Kiddine. Andy passed away in 1968 and his wife in 1969.

Alex married Delva Tolley. They have three sons and two daughters. One son Jim passed away in 1965. Alex and his wife live just east of Clairmont.

Doris married William McCurdy. They have two sons and one daughter. Doris is now widowed and living in Grande Prairie with daughter Jeanette.

Jean is married to Michael Koslowski of Edmonton. They have four daughters.

WESLEY AND FRANCES PENNER AND FAMILY

At age five my maternal grandfather, Cornelius Winter, arrived in Canada from Europe with his family. They walked from Montreal, P.Q. to Manitoba's Red River Valley with their supplies loaded on a Red River cart. As a young man his dream was to one day homestead in Alberta's Peace Country. However, the dream never saw reality. He passed away at age 75 on his farm near Winkler, Manitoba.

Both myself and my wife Fran (nee Slastukin) were born on the prairies, she on a farm near Pelly, Saskatchewan, and I in Winkler, Manitoba. Fran always wished to one day come to Alberta.

We met and eventually married while working in Winnipeg. In 1964 my job took us to the east coast (Halifax, Nova Scotia, for 2½ years), then to Hamilton, Ontario where in 1967 our daughter Julie was born, and finally on to Toronto. I worked and commuted each day to our home in Georgetown, 25 miles away.

Due to our western upbringing, we always felt a little more like visitors to eastern Canada than like residents. During the spring of 1975 we discussed coming back to the west, this time to Alberta. In the summer of the same year we visited the Grande Prairie area where we made arrangements to purchase N.E. 34-72-4-W6. The quiet beauty of Kleskun Hills convinced us that here is where we wanted to live.

We moved from Georgetown, Ontario on the first day of September and arrived at our farm here on September 6, 1975. Coming west, we were once again awe-struck by that huge prairie sky, the greatest change occurring when driving out of Ontario and into Manitoba.

At this time we realize how fortunate we have been to see all of the provinces from Prince Edward Island to British Columbia, and it seems that no single province has more to offer than another. Each has its own special beauty, each its own special lifestyle and people; and each helps to make up this truly grand country of ours.

EMIL RONSBERG

I bought the Bill Ranken land. He had it rented out to Mr. Marten for a while. Like Ranken, I, too, a bachelor was kept busy farming the three quarters

with horses, breaking up what was left to do. At times I put up hay on Kleskun Lake, and I had a grazing lease on the school sections. I made over seven miles of fences. Ranken had the farm fenced and cross-fenced with the posts only twelve feet apart, with first class tamarack, which lasted thirty years. It had to be the very best.

I later sold the farm to Harry Kapalka and moved to Grande Prairie.

JAKE AND LEONA SAWATZKY

Throughout the years we have heard many favourable comments about the Peace River Country, often referred to as "God's Country", but it wasn't until 1962 that I, Jacob Sawatzky, from Maidstone, Saskatchewan, with my father-in-law. Mr. Bert Winter of Lashburn, Saskatchewan, took the time to motor up here to satisfy my curiousity. I was really impressed with the beauty and vastness of the area. The following summer, in July of 1963, I took my wife and family of six, and spent several days in the Grande Prairie, Ft. St. John, and Grimshaw areas. Each evening as we pitched our tent we couldn't help but notice how long the summer days were, and that on clear nights it never really got dark. We often talked about the Peace River Country and the Grande Prairie area in particular, and within, there was that growing desire to make this our home. It wasn't, however, until the fall of 1967 that the opportunity came our way and I was able to purchase a section of land just north of the Kleskun Hills. We were able to dispose of our property here and in March I began moving my machinery so that it would all be here in time for spring work. Since there were no buildings on my farm I had to build a bin which was my home during May and June. After seeding operations were completed I began house hunting. I couldn't move my wife and family of seven children, until we had a place to live. I made many inquiries about vacant farm sights, and finally was able to rent a spot just two miles east of Clairmont, near the lake. The property belongs to Mr. Albert Tomshak, and they were very good to us during our two years there. During this time there was another member added to our family, the only true Albertan, making us a family of 4 boys and 4 girls.

In the spring of 1969 I was able to purchase some adjoining land from William Purves, which had a well and buildings on it. In the summer of 1970 we moved onto it and have lived here ever since. We have enjoyed living here, and as can be expected, our family has grown up and some have homes and families of their own. Our oldest son, Murray is married, has two daughters, and is living in Clairmont. He is a truck driver and farms besides. Our twin daughters are both married. Diana and her husband are living in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan where he is presently assistant pastor at the Evangelical Church. Judy is living in Edmonton, has two sons and her husband is an electrician. Gary is attending Winnipeg Bible College at Otterbourne, Manitoba, this 1976-77 school year, and is anticipating entering the ministry. Joanne is attending Briercrest Bible College at Caronport, Saskatchewan. That leaves us with three children still at home. Barry is taking his grade eleven, Wanda is in grade five and Brent is in grade two. We love the Peace River Country. This is our home.

SUTHERLAND — WESLEY AND ELEANOR — by Eleanor

I came to Canada on January 6, 1920. I had met my future husband in England. He was a Fighter Pilot in the R.C.A.F. and stationed at an aerodrome, one and a half miles from a war hospital where I was a volunteer worker in the Red Cross for three years, a hospital of 1700 patients. We were engaged after knowing each other for only about two weeks and that love lasted for fifty-three years, when he was taken from us all.



Wesley and Eleanor Sutherland.

Wesley met me in St. Johns. We went to his home in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. I was like Alice in Wonderland. The snow and sleighs fascinated me. I came from near London, England, where snow is seldom seen. We were married quietly, February 12, as I knew no one in Canada. The little village had no wedding rings, so my gold signet ring had to do until we got to Halifax to get one and also to buy a wedding cake. We visited Wesley's relations on our way back to Grande Prairie. It seemed fun travelling west in an old Steam-engine train — so slow.

Everything was so different in the houses, etc., after seeing only houses made of bricks in England, but it was all wonderful to me. After reaching Grande Prairie, I stayed a while at a boarding house run by Mrs. Crowe. Then Mrs. Eager, the lawyers wife, invited me to stay with her. This I did and afterwards visited with the school inspector, Mr. Fair, for a while. During all this time a teacherage was being built at Kleskun Hill. I ended up at Mary and Bob Taylors until the teacherage was finished. Mary and Bob were very good to the green English girl. I think my best friends were Ashley and Agnes Thompson, who lived near us. I shall never forget their friendship and all made me welcome. The teacherage was very small but like a palace to me. I was so happy. Our daughter, Jean, now living in North Vancouver, was born in Kleskun Hill on May 8, 1921. Mrs. Turner attended me. She was a retired doctor.

I had never seen a farm, so was very interested in everything that went on around me. Gas and coal oil lamps were a novelty but I didn't care for them at all. I didn't think much of the water. The creek water seemed full of bugs. I like meat, but not in my water. There is one thing I never got used to, here, and that is the eternal mosquito. Some were so big that I'm sure they could hold a pint of blood, and every one seemed to find me.

I knew absolutely nothing about cooking and I carried a little black book with me. I still have it somewhere, and it contained things like "How to make cocoa", how to cook different vegetables, and others. My first bread was buried after dark behind the teacherage. They were like cement blocks, but I had made up my mind to learn. The cause of my bread failure was due to Mr. Charlie Brown telling me to pour boiling water on the yeast and this I did. I never forgave Charlie Brown for that. I wish he could have tasted the bread and other things that I learned to bake.

When we came to Dawson Creek and proved up a section of land, I was able to do anything but milk a cow. I loved my pigs and chickens and had a big garden. I worked very hard on our land and I even learned to drive the tractor.

Besides my daughter Jean, I had two other children, Dr. Ralph Sutherland of Ottawa and Harry Sutherland, our youngest, who was killed in a car accident at the age of twenty-seven, leaving behind three little girls, who are happily married now.

The most of my married life has been spent in the Peace River country, where Wesley and I worked very hard.

Wesley taught in Dawson Creek — 1st school was a log cabin and he was here for 5 years. Then he was in N. Dawson and S. Dawson, and Bessett Creek. We both



Wesley Sutherland, First President of the first Co-op Store at Dawson Creek, B.C.

taught at Moberly Lake (all Indians) for 7 years. Teachers were scarce and the school board asked me to go. I love it here and was very fond of my 30 little children. Wesley also taught in Bessborough school for 7 years. We had a section of land there, and loved the farm.

My husband passed away quietly on August 31, 1973. Half of me died with him, but we will meet one day. In the meantime, I spend a very quiet life in Dawson Creek. My life up here could be another book.

ASHLEY AND AGNES THOMPSON — Fond Memories by Agnes

Agnes M. Reed was born and raised in Kansas.

Ashley F. Thompson was born in Minnesota and came to Kansas as a young lad 14 years old to assist a blind Uncle on the farm.

On April 30, 1913 he and Agnes were married. On July 3, 1914, while they were living on a rented farm, a son Chester Nile was born.

Why did we move to the Peace River Country?

In Kansas wheat was planted in the fall. If the fall was dry and cold, the wheat was killed — and corn could be planted in the spring. The winter of 1916 killed the winter wheat. In the spring of 1917 heavy rains came and washed out most of the fences. When Ashley saw all the neighbors' horses were in our pasture, he got on a horse to separate them. One ran by kicking at his horse and struck his ankle, breaking it. That meant no work for him — help would have to be hired — and corn be bought for seed.

Ashley's father had filed on several homesteads by proxy for us in Canada — but they each had to be abandoned because we hadn't shown up.

We decided, in that spring of 1917, that it was a good time to make the change. I told Ashley we would have to make up our minds quickly before I saw my parents or I might change my mind. So April 25, 1917, we had a sale and left soon after for Canada— Ashley was still on crutches.

As we headed north on the train thru Minnesota, our son broke out with a rash and we were put off the train in New Haven, where the railroad had a hospital — but the Doctor was out and we were told they didn't take contagious diseases. We had no place to go except to the hotel. The next morning the Doctor came to see us there and by that time Ashley had broken out with the measles. By now we weren't wanted in the hotel, so Doctor and hotel-manager collaborated in finding a vacant house into which we were moved, along with the furniture from the hotel room we had been occupying. There we stayed until we were able to leave. As we left New Haven Ashley had traded his crutches for a cane.

At that time, there were two trains a week running from Edmonton to Grande Prairie. If you missed the first one — you caught the next one a few days later — and that is the way it was with us. We arrived in Grande Prairie June 8, 1917. A brass band was playing at the station but it wasn't for us. It was for Rev. Charles Hopkins of Wembley returning from the war. Ashley's father was there to meet us. Our arrival was compatable with his plans. He wanted to leave for the States. We bought his cows, horses and machinery and farmed his Dimsdale land for three years.

In the meantime Grandpa (as he was called by many) (L.D.) Turner sent us word that his son-in-law had filed on a quarter in the Kleskun Hill district but his wife had passed away and he had gone to the States with their children. So in Sept. 1917 we filed on the S.E.

Quarter 28-72-4-W6 and were permitted to do our duties without living on the land as no improvements had been made. It was war time and the grain was needed. In the spring of 1920, we moved onto the homestead into a granary we had built. While putting in the crop on Granddad's place at Dimsdale, we traveled back and forth to do work on our homestead at Kleskun Hill. We spent lots of time going back and forth with outfits and machinery, lunch boxes, bed rolls, milk-cow, cat, chickens, etc.

Our first water supply on Granddad's homestead, was from a well dug beside the muskeg where the water seeped through. On our homestead, the first water was hauled from a creek about a half-mile from the buildings. The creek water had little red wrigglers in it. Ashley tied a 100 pound flour sack over the barrel to strain the wrigglers out so that I wouldn't see them. In the winter time, we melted snow.

One of the first improvements was a dam for watering stock. But afterwards a well was drilled in 1929, and we found an ample supply of water at the depth of 600 feet.

It was in our granary home on our homestead that our tiny baby boy, Russell Gordon, was born on February 22, 1921. Mr. Sutherland, the teacher at Kleskun Hill, went for Grandma Turner to do the honors and Mrs. Cly, a neighbor, came to do the work. In May of the same year, Ashley took the same team and went for Grandma Turner, and a baby girl was born to the Sutherlands in the teacherage at Kleskun Hill. Ashley got Mary Taylor to look after the new baby Jean. Jean grew to womanhood and married Clee Taylor. They now live in North Vancouver.

We lived in the granary for several years in the 20's and built a room on each end. We always had good beef stock and work horses. Ashley was very proud of the horses and cattle. I raised chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys. We also had productive milk cows.



The Ashley Thompson home built in 1929, cat — Jack, in yard.



Ashley Thompson hauling wood, 1928.

Ashley hauled wood with a four-horse outfit to keep our little home warm. Each spring you could see him sitting on a specially-made seat on top of the drill, putting in the crop. He devised this seat because he had problems with his feet, which objected to long hours of standing while making the rounds.

In 1929, we built a good frame house where we worked and lived happily until 1942.

There were many good times in those early years, and most of the time we made our own entertainment. The community would co-operate to get goodies bagged-up for the kiddies at the Christmas concerts. Sometimes a dance would be put on to raise money for treats for the school children. Later plays were put on by adults for fun and amusement.



Gordon Thompson holding horses, when we left for B.C.



Kleskun Hill School 1919, Beatrice Binks on horse, Wesley Sutherland, teacher.



Kleskun Hill School Pupils: Back row: Gertie Havelina, Prim Collette, Agnes Barnes. Middle row: Inez Gillespie, Doris Murchie. Front: Nile Thompson, Cyril Binks, Alex Murchie.

The Kleskun Hill School was built before we moved on to our homestead in 1920. Miss Alfreda Reavley, who taught there from 1921-1924, was the daughter of a Grande Prairie doctor. Her whole class that year: Nile Thompson, Gertie Havelena, Inez Gillespie, Cyril Binks, Doris Murchie, Alex Murchie, Agnes Barnes and Prim Collette. Miss Reavley would laugh as she told of the children telling her there were so many bachelors in the district.

In 1942, Ashley suffered a heart attack. Dr. O'Brien said he just had to quit work and go to a lower altitude. He spent that winter in Vancouver . . . the next winter we both spent in Vancouver while Mr. and Mrs. Havelina stayed with our boys. Our Nile had passed away on February 28, 1931, but another baby boy, Donald Ashley, was born to us on August 4, 1932.

In the spring of 1945 we sold out to Jack Johnson and moved to Ladner, B.C. After a long rest and milder climate, Ashley's health was much improved and he was able to do considerable work again. In 1953 and 1954, he worked on the aluminum plant at Kitimat.

We enjoyed the milder climate, but always loved and remembered the homestead days in Alberta and visited there almost every year.



Agnes and Ashley Thompson on their 50th anniversary.

Ashley had another heart attack and passed away, March 27, 1967. He was laid to rest beside our son, Nile, in Flying Shot Cemetery.

Son, Gordon, and family are farming at Bezanson, east of Grande Prairie. Son Donald, a diesel engineer, is settled with his family in the Vancouver area.

I still live in my own home at 4338 Arthur Drive, Delta, B.C. and I visit Grande Prairie each summer and intend to do so as long as I'm able.

— Agnes Thompson, 1976

FRANK E. TURNER
PIONEERING IN THE NORTH

Frank Edward Turner was born in Fort Collins, Colorado, U.S.A. in 1875, and came to this country from Interior, South Dakota, where he and his family were engaged in ranching.

The call of the Peace River Country in Alberta was irresistible to Frank, so in 1911, he packed and left for the North with his sister and brother-in-law, Ada E. and Hershel E. Alder. He filed on a homestead in the Kleskun Lake vicinity, (N.W. ¼ 22-72-5 W6) and staked claims for his father and mother, Lorenzo D. (Jack) and Hulda Jane Turner in the Kleskun Hill district.

After returning to Interior, plans were made to move North in the spring, so on March 1st, 1912, he left for the new home in Canada, accompanied by his wife Bertha, son Ralph, George, and Ben, daughters, Clara, and Helen, also his father and mother, plus three train car loads of settlers' effects, consisting of machinery, sleighs, wagons, furniture, piano, organ, some chickens, dog, cat and thirty head of horses. A good neighbor, Mr. Ike Boyer also came and helped look after the livestock. He later settled in the East Kleskun District.

When arriving at Edson, which was the end of the steel, it was a very busy time. They had to unload the box cars, get the horses shod, start packing the sleighs and buy enough provisions and clothing for all to last until winter time. They stayed six days at the Immigration Hall and left on the 20th of March with eight sleigh loads. They crossed the Athabasca River on ice, but the snow was melting very fast on the high ground so they soon had to change to wagons. The mud was thick and deep and in some places it was necessary to use from six to ten horses to pull each wagon up the hills. The corduroy was almost completely worn out, which made travelling slow and tedious; they barely made five miles a day.

Finally, the 100 Mile Place was reached. They rested there for three weeks, as Bertha and Frank were presented with a fine baby boy (who holds the honor of being the first baby born on The Edson Trail). He was named David Edson Turner.

During their stay at 100 Mile House, a bad forest fire was raging and dropping hot ashes on the camp, but while the men were digging pits to put the essentials of food in and getting prepared and parked to leave, the wind started to blow from the other direction. Thanks to God as it could have been disastrous. The rest did the horses good also, as they were getting very thin and feed was getting short.

However, after many trials and tribulations, crossing all of the rivers and streams on rotten ice, and hav-



Fox Farm.

ing rabbits or prairie chickens on the menu every day, they did arrive on the 12 of June, 1912, at the three-roomed log homestead palace with a sod roof.

Slough water was used until a well was dug by hand. A cook stove heated the house. Grease lights (rags tied with string, placed in a saucer of grease) were used a lot of the time.

The railroad did not come as far as Grande Prairie until 1916, so previous to that time, Frank and men would go by sleighs — 100 miles to High Prairie each winter and bring back enough provisions, clothes, grain and garden seeds to do until the next year.

Besides farming and ranching, Frank was one of the first pioneers to raise silver foxes in the north (known as the Peace River Silver Fox Farm) before the 1920's. These foxes were equal to the best on the North American Continent. No rodeo or stampede was complete, in the early days, without Frank Turner, as he was the best practical roper in the North Country. In fact he was in a class by himself. Frank passed away in 1943.

Bertha Lee Turner was born in Litchfield, Michigan, in 1874. She moved to Interior, South Dakota to teach school and married Frank E. Turner in 1896.

Although, being a mother of seven children, she still could find time to help and be active in community affairs, a member of the Ladies Institute. She was always willing to help with concerts in the district. When the Kleskun Lake School was built, she organized and conducted the first Sunday School. A musician herself, she taught piano and vocal in that area for several years. Mrs. Turner passed away in 1953.

Ralph Everett, born in 1898, Clara Lee born in 1900, George Eugene in 1903, Ben Swart in 1906, and Helen Ruth in 1908, were all born in South Dakota. They came over the Edson Trail in 1912 with their parents Frank E. and Bertha L. Turner. David Edson, was born on the Edson Trail and Edna Frances at Kleskun Lake in 1917. Our Grandmother Hulda J. Turner brought all of us into the world.

At one time or another, we all attended The Kleskun Lake School, but for a few years there were not enough children to keep that school open, so it was amalgamated with Kleskun Hill School. That meant we drove a team of horses or a span of mules five miles. In winter time we went in a bob sleigh, with straw in the bottom, lots of heavy quilts and heated rocks to keep our feet warm as sometimes it would be fifty or sixty below. Then in the summer time, we went in a democrat.

Ralph joined the Army in the First World War and while training, the Armistice was signed. He will be remembered as being one of the star baseball pitchers of the North Country. He married Eva Collet of Buffalo Lakes and their family are Herm, Glen, Doris and Margie. In later years, Ralph and Eva looked after light houses on the West Coast. Ralph passed away in 1961 and Eva now resides at Prince George, B.C.

Clara taught school for a time as a sub-teacher, then worked in the office for a lawyer, George Fraser, in Grande Prairie. She married Charles Harris in 1923 and they farmed for many years. They had one son Albert; Clara and Charles passed away in 1974 and 1975 respectively.

George was active in baseball and hockey. He

married Helen Seuk, a telephone operator in Clairmont in 1926. They have a family of four, Margaret, Edward, Marion and Jeanie. Besides farming for a few years, George has prospected from the Arctic to close to the 49th parallel. They reside at Merritt, B.C.

Ben farmed in the Clairmont, Bear Lake and Glen Leslie districts for years. He married Annie Nelson of Bezanson, and they have a family of three: Frank, Eleanor and Brian. Later Ben went into the gravel business in Grande Prairie. He died in 1965. Annie lives in Vernon, B.C.

Helen worked at the Land Office in Grande Prairie for four years, then transferred to the Edmonton office in 1933. Married Chester Myers in 1936 and have a family of two, Bertha and Lois. Chester passed away in 1970. Helen resides at Sidney, B.C.

David farmed east of Clairmont and east of Grande Prairie for a few years. He married Mildred Allen of Bezanson in 1937 and their family consists of Lee, Sharon and Robert. David has worked for 27 years for the Department of Highways, and is known far and near, from Valleyview to Hythe to Rycroft. Mildred and Dave make their home in Grande Prairie.



Thanksgiving party: Back row: Trueman Manning, Donald Cameron, George Turner, Frank Turner, Ralph Turner, Milton Armstrong, Hubert Manning, Sandy Cameron, Marquis Jones. Front Row: Jack Turner, Edna Turner, Hulda Turner, Dave Turner, Bertha Turner, Helen Turner, Ben Turner.



Basketball Team 1923: Flossie Graham, Rita Carveth, Jennie Clarkson, Clara Turner, Gladys Clarkson, Helen Turner, Gladys Bryenton.

Edna worked in a doctors office in Fort St. John and also taught leather tooling. She married Stanley Moore of Bear Lake where they farmed, also at Kleskun Hill before moving to Fort St. John. Their family are Warren, Glen and Marilyn. Edna passed away in 1972 and Stanley still resides at Fort St. John, B.C.

Lorenzo Dowe (Jack) and Hulda Jane Turner settled at Kleskun Hill in 1912, 15 miles east of Grande Prairie, where they farmed and also raised silver foxes. He passed away in 1926 at the age of 82. Mrs. Turner was born in Blue Earth, Minnesota, in 1856. A natural born nurse and pioneer neighbor, she gave freely of her time and strength to care for the sick and ailing, when doctors and nurses were not available in the new community. Many babies were delivered by her. Until the age of 75 she never refused to answer a call for help, no matter how severe the weather. "Dr. Turner" as she was known, could look back on over half a century of nursing service in pioneer districts. Mrs. Turner passed away in 1947 at the age of 91.

Hershel E. and Ada E. Alder trekked over the Edson Trail in 1911 from Interior, South Dakota, and took up land on Kleskun Hill, where they farmed most of the time. They died in 1942 and 1943 respectively.

History of "Grandma Turner" as I (Bob Prowd) remember incidents she told of her youth in the U.S.A.

I worked for her in the summer of 1928. Grandma was diabetic and got a cold in October of 1928 and couldn't take cough syrup because of the sugar content and rented her farm and foxes to Rhinehart Ladwig in November 1928. I never saw Grandma Turner since.

Grandma Turner (Hulda) was married at 14. A son, Frank, was born at 15, and a daughter, Ada (Mrs. Hershel Alder) at 17. By the time Grandma Turner's children reached their teens Grandma had time on her hands to spare. She studied to be a doctor and got her



Hulda Jane Turner.

Medical Certificate when she was thirty. An Indian friend of hers, Mrs. John Grey became a nurse, about the same time. Mrs. Turner and Mrs. Grey looked after the health of the Indians on the reserve till the Turners left for the Peace River Country in Canada.

Mr. and Mrs. John Grey came to Alberta about the same time, also Ike Boyer, one of the Turner ranch hands. Grandma always said Ike was the bravest man she knew. The Turners located on the south slope of Kleskun Hill. The Greys and Ike Boyer on the East slope, just south of Kleskun Lake.

The Turners had long legged saddle horses and ran down and killed coyotes with a club. Their start in fox farming began from a fox caught from horseback with a sheep hook and more fox were caught in padded traps outside the fox pen. It proved to be a very profitable business until the early thirties.

I remember trying to help Grandma Turner set a dislocated shoulder for a Mr. Parker of Crystal Creek. Grandma Turner, because of her age, was not quite strong enough to get the joint back in the socket. I wasn't much help. I became faint and was just able to get outside and lay down on the lawn. Grandma Turner put the shoulder in and came out to see to me before I was back on my feet.

LOUIE RICHARD WITHERS

Louie Withers was born on June 20, 1894, in Monett, Missouri, U.S.A. At the age of 19, he decided to try homesteading, and arrived in Edson not knowing he would have to get his own way to the north country. After spending a few days in Edson, Louie decided the only way he was going to get there was to walk; so walk he did. After soaking his feet in every stream he crossed, he arrived at his brother Lawrence's place at Glen Leslie.

On the 10th of July, 1914, he filed on N.E. 33-72-4 W6th, at Kleskun Hill, and got title in 1918. In order to keep his homestead, he managed to break ten acres each year with the use of Lawrence's horses. In turn he worked for Lawrence while his brother was doing carpentry work in Edmonton. Louie cut and built a log cabin from nearby trees. During 1918 he sowed his crop and then joined the army. He sold the crop to Amil Halverson. When he returned from the war, he



Louie Withers courted his wife in this driving buggy and team 1929 when they were married.



Louie and Esther Withers on their wedding day.

took up farming again, batched until April 22, 1929, then, in Grande Prairie, he married Esther Maude Swift of Centreville, Nova Scotia.

Louie was very fond of horses and had as good ones as anyone in the country. A pair of drivers was offered to him if he could catch them. This team had been running loose for over a year and no-one had been able to catch or handle them. Louie caught them after three weeks of trying, and used them to hunt foxes and, with a buggy, when courting his future wife.

Louie and his wife, had five children; 2 boys and 3 girls: Joseph of Fort St. John, B.C. He is married and has three girls: Jo-Anne, married to Briand McNelly, has one son, Travis, and lives in Nelson, B.C.; Janet and Jessie are at home. Donald is married and living in Calgary, Alberta. They have one daughter, Darlene. Doris lives in Claresholm, Alberta. Grace married Ron Dakin and has 2 boys, Kevin and Rory. They live in St. Thomas, Ontario. Mae married Neil Fehr and has 5 children: Barbara, Lyle, Beverly, Terry and Tim, all living in Fort St. John, B.C.

Early in the marriage, his wife became ill and spent 36 years in hospital. She is now living in Lethbridge. Louie raised the boys and his brother, Lawrence and wife, raised Doris. Mr. and Mrs. Gene



Louie Withers with 2 horse outfits, and Ashley Thompson with four horse outfit, together moving graneries.

Kuykendall adopted Grace, and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Robinson raised Mae. The boys got their education at Kleskun Hill school; the girls at Glen Leslie, Grande Prairie and Bear Lake.

Louie farmed with horses until 1945, when he purchased a John Deere D. He raised grain until 1950, and then sowed the farm to grass. The log and frame house was heated by wood stoves until 1963 when they acquired propane. Gas was used for lights. Water was hauled from Bobby Taylor's place, ½ mile west, and later, from Bill Purvis' well. But he had a large dug-out of water for the horses.

In 1965, Louie had the misfortune to have the farm buildings completely destroyed by fire when a whirlwind lifted the fire from the garbage barrel and set the grass in the yard on fire. The farm was sold along with the machinery and he moved into Pioneer Lodge and later, to the Swan Haven Nursing Home. He broke both hips in different years, but managed to walk again.

Louie went to Calgary in 1975, to visit his son, Donald. This was his biggest trip since arriving in 1914. He enjoyed the big city very much.

Louie passed away on the morning of October 31, 1975.

Schools

KLESKUN HILL SCHOOL — by Delva Murchie

In the spring of 1916 Mary (Struhan) Podulsky came with her parents to live in the East Kleskun District. They lived in a tent until they got their log house built. That spring they heard that a school was being opened at Kleskun Hill.

The Struhans lived a long distance from School but Mary cried and persuaded her parents that she must go. She would walk as far as the Babnicks and then go on with them. Men were just building on the school house. But school opened in a tent.

Miss Sarah Bennett a young girl of about sixteen was the first teacher. She came a few days early and walked to visit all the children who were to attend. She stayed at Corys and walked to school each day. She had some very big boys to teach; George and Ben Turner, Warren Harris, Norden Graham, Pete Whalen, and John Julick. Some of the other children were Jessie Barnes, Annie Babnick, Beatrice Binks, Agnes Barnes, Flossie Graham, Helen Turner, Dave Turner, Ester Graham, Elizabeth Tool, Norman Greenwood and Alex Murchie.

School at first was started in March, kept open during the summer months.

It was very cold that March Day. Students all stood around the stove trying to get warm. Two Calliou girls were now attending.

In 1918 flu struck a big number of pupils of Kleskun Hill as well as hundreds of other people throughout the country. Fortunately no one in this area died, although some were very sick.

Next teacher was Miss McColm who also stayed at Corys. Kleskun Lake and East Kleskun children all came to Kleskun Hill. The Turner children had a team — a horse and a mule which they drove and picked up the Kleskun Lake children.

Then came a Mrs. Wilson from Australia to teach. There were two daughters and Mr. Wilson with her. There was no place for them to stay, so two of Bill Rankins granaries were hauled into the school yard and they managed to live in these. As soon as her term was up she returned to Australia. She evidently didn't think much of the cold Canadian winters.

The school board now decided to build a little house for the teacher. Mr. Wesley Sutherland returned from World War I with his English bride to occupy this little cottage, and to teach the school.

During one summer Kleskun Hill was without a teacher so the children went to East Kleskun. Alex Murchie drove a team and picked up a number of the children. Doris (Murchie) McCurdy was in Grade One this year.

Jimmy Ald was the next teacher and then Miss Alfreda Reavley who remained for three years. Miss Reavley's father was a doctor in Grande Prairie. One year during Miss Reavley's stay the school burned down. No one seems to remember the exact date. School was held in a temporary building until an old store building was moved out from Clairmont and equipped for a school.

In 1924 Mr. F. G. Irwin took the position. He taught until June of 1927. During this year Gordon Thompson started. During the 1927-28 term Kleskun Hill had two teachers. Mrs. Nelson and Gwen Stewart.

This early information about the school I obtained from Mary Podulsky, Agnes Thompson and a few of the early students. From 1929 on there are a few records in the county Office, and some in the archives of the Provincial Museum at Edmonton where I obtained the rest.

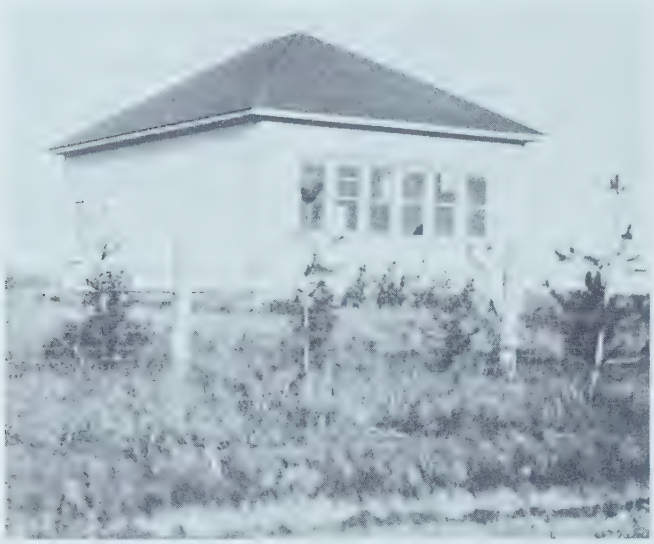
Mr. Black was the next teacher. He remained for two years. Then he took the position at East Kleskun, and his wife taught at Kleskun Hill for one term.

Gertie Havilena, The Leon Martin children, The Fred Tool Family, and Inez Gillepie were others who attended Kleskun Hill School. Sorry, if I have missed any one.

An interesting item in the minutes in 1930 was that a motion was passed to borrow $3.00 to cover expenses.

January 10, '31 Annual Meeting eleven people were

present, E. Ronsberg, A. E. Greenwood, C. H. Brown, and wife, Norman Greenwood, Jesse Harris and wife, George Bass, and Ashley Thompson. The other two names were not listed.



Kleskun Hill School, 1932.

In September of '32 I came to teach at Kleskun Hill. I came from the very south of Alberta, a place called Mountain View. So it was a long journey to Clairmont. The train took twenty-one hours to come from Edmonton to Clairmont. Many young teachers were travelling on it to the north to take teaching positions. I really thought I was coming to the ends of the earth, it seemed to take so long to get here. Mrs. Ashley Thompson and her wee son Donald, met me at the station in Clairmont and took me home with her for a few days. Then I moved into the teacherage. I was pretty



Kleskun Hill Teacherage, 1932.

homesick and lonesome at first as the sight of the Kleskun Hill School was a pretty lonesome place.

I was hired at a salary of $700 a year with $100 off that for the use of the residence. I was also to do the janitor work for $3.00 per month. Janitor work consisted of keeping the school clean, lighting the fire, carrying in big logs of wood for the barrel type stove, and keeping it stoked for the day. In the mornings in winter the place was mighty cold. All the ink in the ink bottles would be frozen solid and have to be thawed out.

The student enrollment was very small. People said it was on account of so many bachelors living in the district. Some of the bachelors were: George Bass, Joe Lacrox, Bill Godfrey, Bob Taylor, Lewis Withers, Bill Rankin, and Bob Thompson. Some of these men were married before I came. Then two couples Mr. and Mrs. Cly and Mr. and Mrs. Hershel Alder had no children.

The children on the roll during my first year were: Marjorie and Pearline Binks, Francis and Mary Ann Burke, Gordon Thompson, and Vinton Cotman. Later Evelyn Weatherly, from Bezanson came and stayed at the residence with me and took Grade Ten.



Kleskun Hill School pupils, 1932. Back: Tom Fitzpatrick, Gordon Thompson, Vinton Cotnam, Francis Burke, Marjorie Binks. Front: Ivan Cotnam, Pearline Binks, Mary Ann Burke.

Mr. Thompson hauled water from his place to the teacherage and put it in a barrel. Each morning I took drinking water over to the school.

During my second term, Ivan Cotnam and Jean Murchie started school. Also my sister Myrtle (Tolley) Brown came to teach at East Kleskun and she stayed with me and rode horseback to her school, until it got too cold in the winter.

The school then was the centre of the social life of the community. Many parties and dances were held there, also meetings and church services.

Miss E. J. Roberts was the next teacher during '34 and '35. Then Miss L. H. Johnson for '35 and '36.

In 1937 the Big School Division took over. Florence W. (Smith) Wales was the teacher. Pupils on the roll were: Robert Dowling, Joe and Donald Withers, Ivan and Grant Cotnam, Thomas, Phyllis, and Elaine Fitzpatrick, Jean Murchie, and Leon and Dale Harris. In March of that year Margaret Greenwood and Ervin Mayer started.

1938 and '39 Miss Winnifred Willis was teaching. New pupils were Dorothy Pratt, Grade X, and Ronald Dowling, Grade 1, in the spring Doris Withers and Joyce Harris began their school life.

Myrtle I. Tolley taught the next year '39 and '40. She had fifteen pupils, Dennis Fitzpatrick, Jean Klaezkielo, and Donald Thompson joined the throng.

1940-'41 Miss Rena McKinney and her brother John attended school. She was followed by Miss Kathleen Phillips. Albert Greenwood started in April of this year. Mrs. M. J. Bickner taught in '43 and '44. She had sixteen pupils. New names on the register were: Gerald, Donald, Patricia and Eileen Bjerke, Floyd Bickner, Annie John, Walter, and Victoria Kosik.

Mrs. Bickner passed away in December. Marion Heller taught from November to the end of April. Rhoda M. Patterson taught during May and June.

During 1942 the school operated on Mountain War Time. Open — 10 A.M.; Noon — 1 to 2 P.M.; close — 4:30 P.M.

January 1942 School Meeting it was moved by P. Fitzpatrick that the school be moved to the centre of the populated district. Mr. R. Ronsberg donated a new site N.E. corner of N.E. quarter of section 32-72-4-6. An amount of $50 was allocated for moving it. But the school was never moved.

C. M. McIntosh taught in 1944-45. Floyd Mayer was enrolled this year. The Johnson Family moved on to The Ashley Thompson Farm. Ashley and Agnes had moved to Ladner, B.C. The Johnsons had three boys to enter school, Kenneth — Grade 1, Donnell — Grade 3 and John — Grade 4. Edward Kapalka started in March.

1946-'47 Elaine Fitzpatrick was supervisor. She had eighteen pupils. Stan Hambley was superintendent. November 13 the five Kaczkielo children left.

During the next few years teachers were not available so supervisors were placed in charge of the school. These were Miss M. A. Kalischuck, Mrs. J. J. Thompson, Miss Annie Chugg, Miss P. B. Webber, Miss Kathleen Grant, and Kathleen M. Mackey.

September 7, 1954 the school was sold to Alex Murchie and the barn to S. Kosik. The pupils were vanned to larger centres, like Clairmont and Sexsmith.

Miscellaneous Anecdotes

(NOTE CONCERNING THE NAME)

I have been told that "Kles-kun" means "white mud". After making many inquiries, I have not been able to confirm this. Mr. David T. Williamson, who grew up at Sturgeon Lake and speaks Cree very fluently, says that it is not Cree. Persumably, then it must be a Beaver word if it is indeed an Indian term.

Beavers formerly inhabited the area. In any case, it dates back to 1879, when Dr. George Dawson's report to the Geological Department of Canada was published. The map that accompanied the report shows "Kles-kun Lake", a fairly large body of water, with a large swampy area at the eastern end. The hills were not specially designated at that time.

A GEOLOGICAL ACCIDENT — by Dorthea Calverley

Did you know that there is a place in the Peace River Country, not more than twenty miles east of Grande Prairie, where you can step out of your car onto soil that the dinosaurs once trod? The area was already named by the Indians in 1889, when Dr. George Dawson's party of surveyors and scientists were the first to enter the Pine Pass to cross the Peace River country from the West. The name appeared on the map that accompanied their report to the Geological Department of the Government of Canada. A nearby shallow lake, the home of myriads of waterfowl and muskrats, was named Kles-Kun Lake, now drained by the white men and gone these sixty years. The hills remain.

Travel east on the Grande Prairie — Edmonton Highway about twenty miles, until on your left appears a large Highway "Point of Interest" sign. Look north to the horizon where a range of low hills looks quite ordinary, except that you may distinguish some cut-banks that suggest a river course. If the sign intrigues you turn north on a well-gravelled road just west of a tall-spired white Catholic church. The road will lead you, very shortly, into a broad, shallow valley. This may post glacially have been a river or the arm of a large lake that extended north, seemingly forever, and southeast towards Sturgeon Lake and the hills north and west of Valleyview.

Quite amazingly, on the flat bottom of the shallow valley stand several low, chocolate drop shaped small hills — the well known part of the Kleskun Hill, with steep fluted sides. They are seventy million years old, — sixty-nine million years older than the last glacial age. How did these relatively tiny mounds manage to survive?

The nearest place where similar soil can be seen is said to be in a Wapiti River area, or in the famous Drumheller Badlands. Perhaps we should first try to account for their being here in the first place.

In the far back mists of geological time, there had been a range of mountains eons older than the Rockies, along the western edge of the continent, standing above the beds of ancient oceans that had sloped over or around these mountains and the old, old Laurentian Mountains around today's Hudson Bay. The continent of North America had been behaving much like a dilapidated raft or shallow barge, wallowing about on the earth's crust, now and again tipping from side to side or end to end so that the oceans sloshed over the top, which also buckled at times to form saucer like or trough like depressions on the middle. The Peace River District has been part of the geology of the Great Central Plains of North America for at least two billion years, give or take a few million. The oldest rock, the Precambrian bedrock, visible in Alberta today around the northwest corner of the province, was formed of the washed down and solidified remains of the old, old, mountains we spoke of earlier.

Seven times in the following eons of time the Pacific washed over what is now parts of Alberta. The earth's surface doing long, slow rolls, so to speak, letting the waters in and then tipping them out again. When the west side was high, the rivers washed silts and gravels and the remains of living creatures down towards the central plains of which the Peace River is a portion. During several of these manoeuvres, parts of the Peace River refused to go under. Enough was washed down to make an overburden of soil over the Precambrian rocks to a depth of two miles or more. Hardened into shales, sandstones or limestoned, the layers or strata of various textures and colors left a permanent record of what the rivers were bringing down, and in what order.

About a hundred and twenty million years ago, the Pacific waters were turned out for at least the seventh time — and they haven't returned yet.

At the end of that era, the central areas of the continent slumped, perhaps due to the pulling out of lava by volcanoes in Western British Columbia. The Arctic Ocean flooded in, but was pushed out when the central plains buckled up, like a long, slow hiccup. Then the Gulf of Mexico's warm, salt seas overflowed parts of Alberta, and retreated again. A seesaw between these two waters finally resulted in the two bodies of water meeting — and parting again. All the while the prehistoric rivers kept building deltas out into the waters, resulting in layers or strata of gravels, sand and clay being laid down, one over the other, in different coloured bands.

Some volcanoes spewed out whitish ash which was carried by wind or water. Where it decomposed with clay it formed layers of bentonite, a peculiar soft rock that is very slippery, and will not let water pass through it, either down from rain, or up from underground reservoir. We can see some in the weathered eastern end of the Kleskun Hills.

The invasions by the oceans went on for about sixty-five million years, ending about seventy million years ago, when the Rocky Mountains had at long last begun to get uneasy and thrust themselves up. In the warm Gulf seas there were not only innumerable forms of water life, but also the huge dinosaurs wallowing the swampy shores, the water helping to support their monstrous bodies. The strata of sedimentary rocks, shales, sandstones and bentonite formed a vast delta over nearly all Alberta, also a strip extending a little way into the Northeastern half of British Columbia near Dawson Creek and also over into Saskatchewan. These layers are known as the Edmonton formation, the last delta to be formed in the prehistoric seas which afterwards shrank to their present locations.

We can read the story of these happenings in the deeply eroded valleys of the Drumheller Badlands and in the odd little Kleskun Hills rising out of their shallow valley floor. Millenium after millenium, they were piled one on top of another like different colored pages in a looseleaf notebook. About seventy million years ago nature wisely decided to hibernate after printing pictures of the dinosaur tribe on the top page of the prehistoric history. The glacial age was about to descend for the first of several times, withdrawing and advancing. The dinosaurs and countless warm sea creatures did not hibernate — they died.

The area known as the Peace River today was glaciated, all except Nose Mountain, south of Beaverlodge. In fact, the Kleskun Hills must have been visited by both the Cordilleran Glacier from around Hudson Bay, because limestone boulders and granite boulders were left there by the ice that was up to a mile thick. Why it did not wipe out these low hills is a mystery, although we should not think of these glaciers as advancing rapidly as they do down a mountain. Probably there was more accumulation of snow, (as over the continent of Antarctica) than pushing forward of the mass, although there is evidence of that too.

Just yesterday, geologically speaking, — to be more exact, about ten to twelve thousand years ago — the Peace River area woke up to find that the ice was gone, leaving lake sized puddles of melted water, and streams draining them. One such slow stream must have drained a huge extension of Lesser Slave, or other Northern Swampy hollows, flowing towards the Smoky River which, by way of the Peace, started for the Arctic Sea. It cut off the nose of the low Kleskun Hill range leaving cut banks along its former course. It also left these several strange, rounded huge hummocks which once must have been islands cut off from the main range.

The geological report No. 21 of Dr. Ralph Rutherford to the Research Council of Alberta in 1930 refers to them thus, "In the Grande Prairie District a small repland known as the Kleskun Hills occurs in the central part of township 72, range 4, west of the sixth meridian. The strata underlying this repland are well exposed at the east end where they are weathered out into badlands. Lithologically, they are very similar to the typical Edmonton formation, and are composed essentially of bentonitic clays, thin sandy phases and their coal scams. These strata are estimated to be about 1100 feet above the base of the Wapiti formation. There are at least 250 feet of these Edmonton-like beds exposed in the Kleskun Hills. Exposures of similar beds occur near the village of Beaverlodge at about the same strategraphical location."

Where these beds come to the surface they are easy to identify, because the peculiar action of bentonite to water modified the erosion pattern which consists of washing off the outside layer into almost vertical faces, deeply cut — now vertical troughs, like downspouts, giving the face a fluted look like the closed bellows of an accordion.

Around the hills is a wide area of whitish bentonite clay on the valley floor. Enough Loess from surrounding areas has blown over it to sustain some kinds of desert type plants including cacti and sedums. Thus predictably the south faces are near desert. Oddly, the flora of some of the sloping, turfed north sides supports some mountain like flora. However, on the north side, only of the Northern most hill, a spring seeps out near the top and waters a typical parkland growth. In several places, when walked upon, the hills give off a peculiarly hollow sound. Some shallow caves have appeared part way up, which have since collapsed. Is there a cavern underneath? The geologists know but haven't told us.

Two of the hills have names. The largest southmost hill has a stone marked, "Garrett Hill", after the former reeve of the municipality who loved this place and shared his interest with the community. As long as he was active, on the last Sunday in July, fifteen hundred to two thousand people would gather for a "geological picnic". Professors from the University of Alberta would address them on the history and geology of the area.

The other big hill is called "Dinosaur Hill" because a few fossil remains have been picked up. At one picnic, a little boy found "the most perfect dinosaur tooth" the lecturing professor had ever seen. Indiscriminate digging to find more is doing irreparable damage and hastening the day when all will be washed

away. In the last twenty years a regrettable amount has already occurred. Much of it, however, by cattle pasturing.

An appeal was made to the Provincial Government to have the area set aside as a botanical sanctuary for preservation of a unique piece of the virgin prairie as the earliest settlers knew it. The idea got some approval, but it was "improved" into a picnic park instead of a wilderness spot. Snowmobiles, motorbikes and nature-blind people are changing the terrain. Some flowers, numerous twenty years ago, are gone. The sheets of red lilies haven't long to star the turf.

The Hills had historical significance. The prized wild onions grew here. An exceptionally heavy growth of large juicy saskatoon berries was a popular source of one of the ingredients of the best grade of pemmican — our prehistoric trade commodity. The southern Crees were disputing with the indigenous Beavers long before the white man came invading the area from the South, when the wood bison roamed these plains and wintered here. The fur traders, too, traded for the extra - fine saskatoon - enriched pemmican as well as for furs.

One of the last battles of the Beaver Indians is commemorated by two boulder-covered mounds where five braves fell, although the chase of the survivors continued away over to Spirit River. One grave has already been vandalized.

Nearby is an unmarked but well remembered spot on the unspeakably bad old Edson Trail, which led from the end of steel-west of Edmonton to the village of Grande Prairie. The road dropped over an ancient river bank here, where some incident gave it the local name of "Breakneck Hill". Nearby a year or so ago, I found the remains of a shattered sawbuck-type packsaddle, weathered almost to indistinguishability. Not far away, the bleached bones of a horse skeleton were being eroded out in a gully.

Climb the highest hill (on foot please!) — and ask yourself, "Why do these little spots stand out alone after seventy million years as part of the vast flat ocean-bottom Edmonton formation?" I have never heard a conclusive reason, but several "explanations" have been suggested. One is that a vast underground bed of coal or peat got a fire, by lightning, as at Hudson Hope. If it burned out, the valley surrounding the hills may have sunk rather than having been eroded away. If some underground pillars were accidentally left, it might support some of the top layers, as they do the main range to the west. There are lignite coal seams not far away.

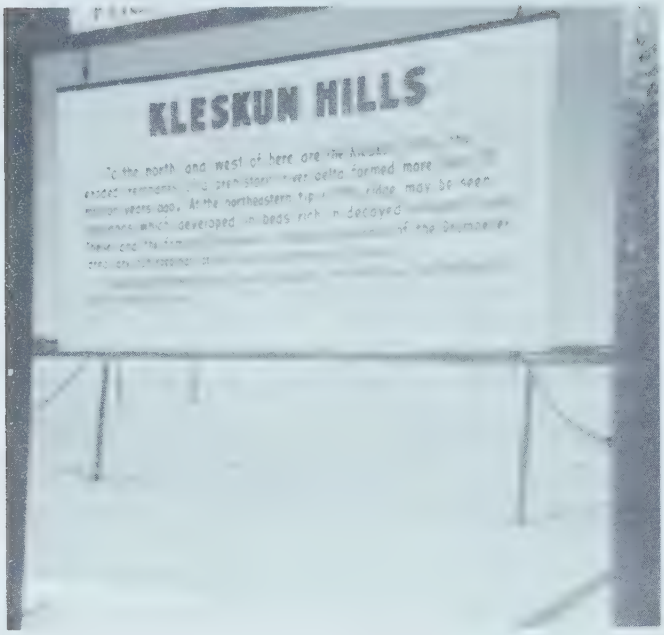
Another surmise is that an underground river washed out some soft substrata, so that the valley might have sunk, leaving these knobs supported on more substantial base.

Or did some underground springs bring up some chemicals such as those that wash out of places in the banks of the Smoky River not so far away? If these chemicals might have made the earth more resistant.

Or was there a trapped pool of oil that was somehow drained away into the Valleyview field, a short distance away, leaving an unsupported dome, now largely subsiding? There was an earthquake reported in the Valleyview area in 1970, said to be due to withdrawal of the oil. The geologists who made seismograph recordings know, but they aren't telling the casual questioner, like me. Oddly, neither is the geology department of the University of Alberta. That leaves us the fun of speculation.

So visit the valley anytime from earliest spring when the silky, mauve-blue crocus blooms in profusion, until late autumn paints the hillsides from a palette of warm and glowing hues. To anyone with a bit of knowledge and a spark of imagination, this is the gateway to a fascinating past.

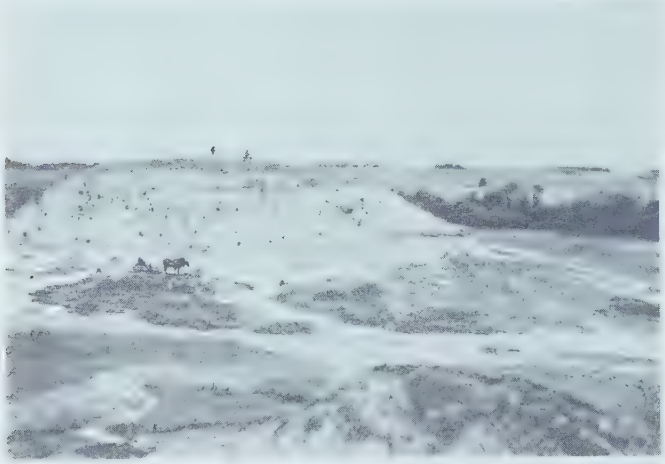
Pictures of Interest



Sign on Highway 34, just south of the park.



Kleskun Hill Park.



Almeyer Leroux, in Kleskun Hill Park, 1922 taken by Hugh Wilson.



Garret Hill, named after Bill Garret, Councillor of Glen Leslie District.

Kleskun Lake



Family Histories

STANLEY AGAR — by Leila Agar

In 1911 Stanley Agar drove a team of bulls for Robert Cochrane on the famous trek to the Peace River country with a load of farm and household equipment, destined for the homesteads and south African scrip which Mr. and Mrs. Cochrane had filed on and bought on their trip by democrat and horseback the year before.

They left on February 3 and arrived at the homestead on March 17 — 42 days of blizzards and icy trails. There were a few days of non travel when the necessities of life had to be considered such as washing, baking bread, etc., not to mention a rest for the bulls and horses. One such time was when the stop was made due to a blizzard. Upon rising in the morning, Stanley noticed that there was no smoke issuing from the stove pipe of the Cochrane vehicle so investigated and upon opening the door of the conestoga, was shocked to see that everything was coated with snow. Upon calling, he saw the snow over the bunk start to crack, from the movement of Mr. and Mrs. Cochrane who were cozy and warm under their snowy bedding.

Mrs. Cochrane drove a team of horses and followed behind Stanley with his load, pulled by more or less balky bulls. One hears of some brother and sister bickering due to the lack of speed of Stanley's bulls and the tailgating of his sister's snappy little team.

Mr. Cochrane had filed on a quarter section for Stanley while filing on his wife's and his own homestead and buying their South African scrip at Grouard on their way back to Edmonton in 1910. It was the quarter section adjoining the Cochrane land on the west and north of the highway. Stanley was a dyed in the wool prairie native and gave up the homestead which eventually was owned by Herman Wendt.



Edna Agar, unidentified person and Robert Cochrane, en route from Edson to Grande Prairie — 1912.

In July, Stanley and another man decided to walk out. They expected to find stopping places on the trail so travelled light. No stopping places so six days later they arrived at Edson worn out and starving. Stanley's friend started on a delicious looking meal but soon headed for outside to get rid of the too hastily eaten food.

Stanley never returned to the Peace country again until 1937 when we got starved and blown out of Saskatchewan.

Irwin Agar made his first trip into the Peace by the first train to Grande Prairie in 1916. He filed on a homestead at Kleskun Lake which he later sold to John Melnyk for $500.00.

Stanley joined the 48th Highlanders in 1915 and after a short training period at Camp Hughes he and his brother George were shipped overseas. A short training in England and then to France where his brother George was wounded while they were defending Hill 70. Stanley carried George to the rear but had to return to his post in the trenches. Three days later at the age of 21, George died from his many shrapnel wounds and is buried in Lillers cemetery in France.

Stanley was destined to continue on to the end, taking part in the march to Germany. He returned home in May, 1919 and in August married Lelia Durnin and took up farming at Floral, Saskatchewan, where he was joined later by Irwin who had spent three years in England in the Army returning to Canada in 1921.

In 1937 the partners returned to the Peace country farming together at Dimsdale until Stanley's death in 1957. Irwin put in two more crops but had to give up as he had fallen off a ladder and broke his back. He sold the farm to Ed McIntosh and in 1959 retired to Vernon, B.C., where he died on May 4, 1973. They are both buried in the family plot at Floral, Saskatchewan.

ERNIE BEARD

Ernie Beard came, with his parents, to the Peace Country in 1911.

After he grew up, he filed on two different quarters east of Clairmont Lake. He sold out after a short time, and moved to Seattle. His dad wrote to him a few years later, telling him that times were pretty good and that he should come back to the Peace Country. But Ernie wrote back saying, "I have starved to death and froze to death all I'm going to!" He never returned to the Peace and passed away some years ago.

YORGEN BENSON

Yorgen Benson was a bachelor, who came from Iceland. He homesteaded on the south end of Clairmont Lake and also bought a fraction of about 60 acres, in the same area, sometime in the early 1920's.

In the fall of 1927, Mr. Gunn and Elmer Kline (who lived next to Benson's), went to Grande Prairie to the Old Timer's Association meeting. When they came back, about midnight, they noticed that Benson's homestead house was burning, as was the frame house on the Jack Hardie homestead, which Benson had acquired. The two men notified the police. All the neighbors, for miles around, came to see the fires and the yards were covered with tracks. Judge Galway told Mr. Falk that he and the police sergeant found Mr. Benson's body lying in the frame house, at the downstairs entrance to the small cellar, with barbed wire twisted around his neck. No one was ever convicted as being guilty.

MR. BEIFERD

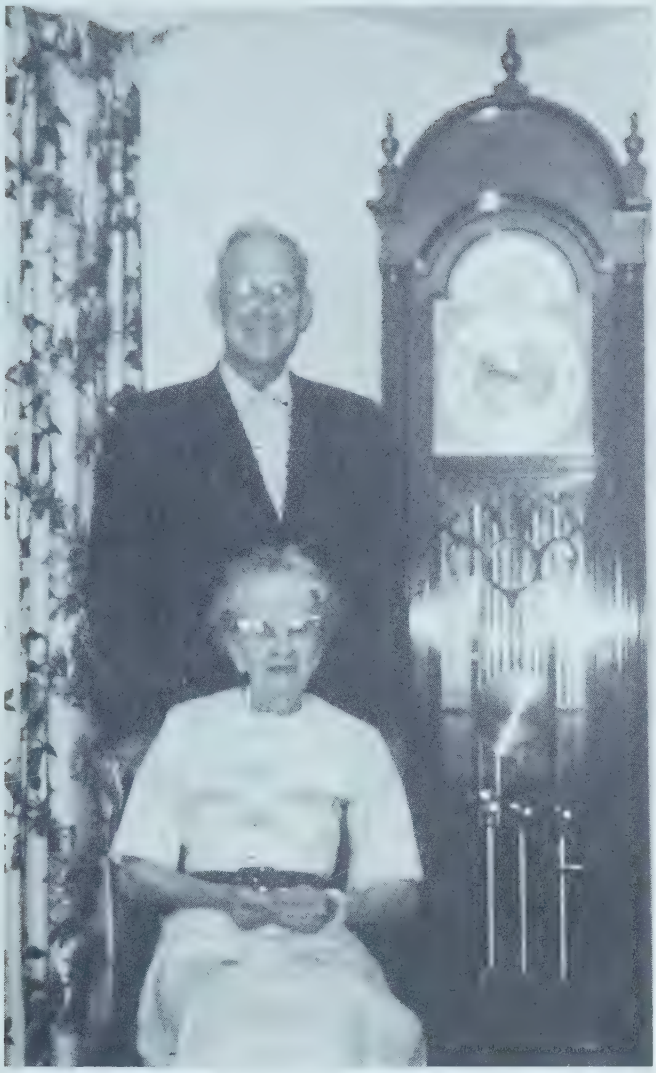
Mr. Beiferd was a Scotch bachelor who had a homestead north of Lawrence Fishburn's. He apparently left the country shortly after proving up his homestead.

CECIL CARVETH — A NOCTURNAL INHABITANT OF KLESKUN LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Cecil Carveth left Newcastle, Ontario in the early fall of 1911 to join his father, Arthur W. and brother, Rupert in Edson and start out on the Edson Trail. Mr. Carveth Sr. and Rupert had filed on land in Grande Prairie in July, leaving there in time to meet Cecil in Edson and bring the two wagons over the Trail. The summer rains had made a mire of the Trail and continuing rains brought a halt to their wagons and leaving one at the 90 mile and the other at the 100 mile stopping places, they continued on, their horses too weak to carry a person on their backs.

After leaving Sturgeon Lake and nearing the Goodwin's Hay Camp, Old Tom bogged down so deep in a soft spot that they were unable to get him out for some hours and he became so weak that Rupert had to stay at the Hay Camp with him until he recuperated enough to travel. Cecil and his Dad walked on to Grande Prairie and within a week the Goodwin Bros. oats were making a better horse out of Old Tom and he also finished the journey and worked on the Carveth farm for the next fifteen years.

Cecil filed his homestead in the later, Twilight District, S.E. 15-72-5 but his scrip was located in the Kleskun Lake School District, farther north. He proved up his homestead by living on his father's land six months of the year with the exaction of having to break an extra twenty acres of land on the place. To prove up the scrip, S.½ of 22-72-5, for the other six months of the year, he walked the 2¼ miles to the cabin he had built on the land, to sleep on the place and return the next morning to breakfast at the home place. It was quite exhilarating to walk that far night and morning but it became rather monotonous before



Cecil and Edith Carveth in their Newcastle home, 1971.

the summers came to an end but the duty was performed faithfully for three successive summers.

There were quite a number of children in the Kleskun Lake District — the Turners, Twomblys, Kelletts and Harris families, to name a few, so it was decided to build a school for them. In the summer of 1912, Cecil was delegated to take a team of oxen and go to the Argonaut sawmill south of Bezanson on the Wapiti River to bring back a load of lumber for the school. This was a round trip of almost fifty miles and as oxen do not trip along very fast, he was gone some time, partly because it had rained all night while he had been at the sawmill and the Red Willow slough was covered with water and Cecil, seeing a few feet of ground without any willows growing on it, thought it might have a soddy bottom to hold up his wagon wheels but upon pulling up close to it, got two wheels down to their axles in the survey corner pits, dug by the surveyors. It took a long time to unload the lumber, let the oxen pull the wagon out and load it all up again. When the school was being built, the Carveth boys joined the volunteer group that erected it under the able guidance of Robert Cochrane, the contractor who realized the sum of three hundred and twenty-five dollars for building the school.

Cecil proved up his homestead and scrip in Grande Prairie and whether it was the girl friend he left behind or because he wanted to go back in business again but the last paper of the Newcastle Independent of 1915 stated that Cecil Carveth was on a prolonged visit to his old home town. It was only a short time before he had acquired some of his father's grain business and in 1917, married the girl of his dreams.

He became involved in the Municipal life of the village and served as the Mayor of Newcastle for many years and was rewarded by becoming Warden of the Counties of Durham and Northumberland. He was also an avid promoter of baseball and hockey in the district and has exhibited a large number of movie films that he took many years ago in the locality.

Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Carveth of Newcastle, Ontario, and Mr. and Mrs. Rupert Carveth of Victoria, B.C., returned to Grande Prairie in 1971 to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of those eventful trips over the Edson Trail and the many other experiences encountered in 1911.

THE JAMES COCHRANE STORY

I was born in Manitoba in 1918 and from the time I learned to write, I've spelled my name Evelyn but in 1958 when I sent to Winnipeg to see if I was registered, I was shocked to find that my name was spelled Evaline.

In July, 1938, I had a chance, with some other girls, Allie Parrish was one, of a ride to Vancouver with Mac Swallow who was going there to get his family. This was my first time away from home and I planned to visit relatives for two weeks. However, I worked at different jobs and stayed until nearly Christmas. After that I was at home part-time and worked in different places. I helped Mrs. Norman Moon when she broke her wrist and had boarders to cook for. The winter of 1941-42 I cooked at Jim Sedore's logging camp near Silverwood. The next summer I cooked for Fitzgerald Construction with the help of Myrtle for a while and then Millie from Nampa and Lorna LaValley from Bezanson helped me. The camp was south of Grande Prairie on the Wapiti and they crushed gravel for the airport until freeze-up. We had to quit then as the only heat available was from the wood stove we cooked on. In early spring I went to cook at Moon's logging camp up on the Wapiti when their cook had to quit. When water started running over the ice, we moved down to the sawmill, south of Bezanson. The next day we stood on the bank to watch the ice break up and move out. Two days later, the bank from where we stood, dropped down into the river bed. I went home in May when Mum had to have a gall bladder operation, her first time in hospital.

On a crisp fall day, November 10th, 1943, Jim Cochrane and I were married in Grande Prairie with brother Fred and Betty Love standing up with us and we had the reception at home in Bezanson. We had a dance that night in the old Bezanson Hall as was the custom in those days. Jim had previously built a cabin on the Wapiti, near the mouth of Bear Creek for us to spend our first winter in. Jim's Dad took us the next day, south of Glen Leslie as far as he could travel by car and we walked the rest of the way with packs on

our backs. Jim had taken our supplies down beforehand by team and wagon or sleigh after the snow came. Al Peddy had a cabin there too and trapped that winter, so we had a neighbor. Mr. and Mrs. Hanz Rush had a cabin up river and trap line so we saw them the odd time also. We had nice weather and the river froze beautifully clear that winter. We could walk on the ice and see fish down below. Some got trapped in shallow holes at the mouth of the creek and we caught some by banging the ice with the axe. This would stun them, then we quickly chopped them out. There wasn't much snow on the ice and Dr. Gurth O'Brian drove down and visited us one Sunday. Jim's folks visited us one afternoon and when they went to go home the clutch had gone and there was just one gear in the car so Jim and I went home with them. We walked up to the farm one time too, which took us all day.

We spent part of the next winter at the cabin trapping but the winter was colder with a lot of snow and we didn't have as good a catch as the first winter when we got $300.00 for our fur. We spent the odd weekend at our cabin in the summer when we could get away. We would take our flat bottomed row boat down south of Grande Prairie and float down to the cabin and then on down to the Ferry on the Smoky. The next summer after visiting Dad (Will Ford) in the hospital where he had been ill for quite some time, we went for the weekend. Fred Sedore was working on the Ferry when we landed there in the rain. He told us Dad had passed away that morning.

Jim took over running the farm after we were married so we had to live at the farm. We didn't have a house of our own so had to live with Jim's folks. We had hired help when possible and I helped Jim outside. This wasn't a very good arrangement as it meant Jim's mother had to do a lot of the cooking for everyone.

World War II was on and it was hard to get help to take off the crop. 1942-43 were the last years Jim used the binders and threshing machine for harvesting. He and a native from Sturgeon Lake did a good part of it by themselves; work that ten or more men would normally do, so it was a long drawn-out affair.

Jim's dad, having farmed with horses, was very reluctant to change and buy machinery. One of the first things he bought that year, after talking his dad into lending him the money, was a combine. They had a Caterpillar tractor so Jim and I could do a lot of the work by ourselves. Jim pulled the combine with the tractor and I would shovel the grain back in the bins. The bins were out in the field so we dumped the grain from the combine into the bins. As the bins were getting pretty well worn out we spent a lot of time patching them and papering the floors before they would hold grain. Those first two years we got part-time help from men who worked for a few days, help which we were thankful for. One of those men was Fred Sedore. I'll never forget him saying, "I never saw anyone trying to put grain in corrals before!" I must say here that Fred's wit and good natured remarks were enjoyed by many. It was a sad day in the district when we found he had been drowned in a car accident.

In 1945 we built our house with the help of Jim's dad. It was a happy day when we could move in that December and work on the inside the rest of the winter. After that the hired man for the summer stayed with us till we built a bunk house. It seemed



Jim Cochranes combine with his invention of a home-built cab, the first of its kind.



Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cochrane — 50th anniversary.

from then on there was some building to build each year, a granary, shop or machine shed. In 1964 when Jim was so sick he had carpenters finish the last shed and build the last granary he figured the farm needed.

Cochranes used to haul water from a spring a mile and a half north, but in 1928-29 they had a deep well drilled and used a windmill to pump water. In 1950 when the power came through they quit using the windmill. We used to haul wood from the homestead, two miles east. In 1966 when Shortie Frost renovated the house we bought an electric stove so wood was no longer required.



Evelyn and Jim Cochrane at their cabin on the Wapiti River.

In April, 1946 we decided to go down to the cabin for a few days before spring work started. We loaded our boat and took lots of food as we weren't sure how long we would be away, depending on the weather. Jim's dad took us in the car with the boat and trailer to the Wapiti and we said we would likely be back Sunday. Up river from our cabin we decided to stop and look at some beaver work where they had been cutting a lot of trees down. While we were there, Jim noticed two men across the river and down a long way from us, walking along the shore. When they got up river we couldn't see them as there was an island between us. We maneuvered our boat across to the island and walked across to see them. The walking had gotten rather tough for them as the bank was steep so they waded that part of the river thinking they were getting to the other side. I don't know what would have happened if they had tried to cross the rest of the river as it was deeper and wider. Certainly they would have to swim to shore. We had no idea who they were when we met them on the other side of the island. The older fellow was too overcome to speak for awhile when he saw us. They were two American flyers who had gone missing more than two weeks before. The extensive air search for them had been given up and we thought they would be dead. Dick Ledward and his Uncle E. D. Ledward whom we got to know as Stub, walked with us back to our boat and we proceeded down to the cabin. Dick was quite nervous in the boat and said he would rather ride in a plane any day. I made them some sandwiches and gave them milk to drink as we floated down the river. As you can imagine they were very hungry. They got dried out at the cabin and had their first real meal since they went down in their plane 18 days before. They had been taking a plane to Alaska from the U.S. and had become lost in fog as they neared Grande Prairie. They flew off course and became low in gas so made a forced landing somewhere up on the Kakwa river at the mouth of a creek, so they figured from their map.

They had walked some two hundred miles along the Kakwa and Smoky and then up the Wapiti thinking they might be on Bear Creek and it would lead them right to Grande Prairie. Dick said when we met them "Isn't Grande Prairie just up around the bend a ways?" They would have come to the ferry on the Wapiti if they had kept going, but they said if they hadn't come to Grande Prairie in a day or two they would go back down the rivers to the Alcan Highway which crossed the Smoky. They weren't without food entirely as they came across at least two trappers' cabins where there was some food. Also they had a gun which they took and said they left money for. They were able to get some meat with it. They found some rubbers which they took and they helped a great deal in walking in snow and slush along the rivers. These two fellows from the city, dumped in the middle of nowhere, didn't have much knowledge of survival. They did some things that the trappers weren't happy about we learned when they came out later that spring. But it is quite possible that those things they found in the cabins saved their lives.

We spent the night at our cabin and proceeded down the river the next day to Moody's crossing. Other than a few deer, one they shot, they hadn't seen much game on their long journey. We stopped at the mouth of the Wapiti to get a piece of deer meat they had cached there in case they had to come back. When we landed at the crossing and tried to phone Cochranes, they weren't home. They didn't expect us back that soon. While we were waiting there Irving Ames came along in a little Model T Ford he was using at the time and the two Ledwards and I got a ride up to Bezanson with him to Mum's place. We arrived just in time for supper.

The news spread through Bezanson about the flyers being found and a lot of people gathered at Fords to see them before Jim's dad came to pick us up. That evening several people came out from Grande Prairie to see the two flyers at Cochranes' farm. Commander Pate of the Air Force and Dr. Carlisle were among them. The boys phoned home that night, one of the first civilian calls to go through on the new phone line to the States.

The next day we drove to Sturgeon Lake as Jim wanted the fellows to see some of our country. We came back for supper and made ice cream as a treat for the boys. We took them to the airport on Tuesday where they caught the plane to Edmonton.

After spring work was finished that year, Jim decided we would go in by pack horse to try and find the plane. Along with Elmer and Allen Chugg we set off on horseback for the Kakwa Country. The river was very high at the time so we couldn't cross it with the horses. Not knowing where to look we had no luck in finding the plane. It was a never-to-be-forgotten trip, one of many that Jim was to make.

Several years later the plane was discovered by a trapper in that area but up river much farther than Jim had thought it would be, at Copten Creek. By then it was pushed around and damaged with logs and ice in the spring floods.

There was another plane went missing a few years later, 1952, coming from Edmonton to Grande Prairie. It was an Air Force plane with three men and a payroll on board. The plane lost its props and crashed. From the last message received it was believed to be somewhere along the Big Smoky. Jim and Henry Ford went with the jeep to Moon's mill on the Wapiti and snowshoed across to the Smoky. They were out two nights on a search, however it was spotted from a search plane while they were away, southeast of Economy Lake off the Goodwin Road. It had burned. The authorities went in and brought out the remains and payroll. Henry, Jim and Prince Ames snowshoed in on a cutline to the plane, and were gone two days. It can be gotten to easily now by snowmobile as Elmer Ford did this winter.

The next summer when the Alaska Highway was opening up to civilians, Jim, his dad and I made a trip up to Whitehorse in our new Chev truck. It was a memorable trip with so much new country to see.



Bobby, Billy, Betty and Bonney Cochrane with forty year old Teddy — 1959.

In the spring of 1948 our first son was born, Robert James, the first Cochrane grandchild, which pleased the grandparents and us immensely. Over two and a half years later, 1950, when Jim and Bobby came back from delivering me to the hospital to have our second son, William Ford, Bobby said "Daddy are you a good cooker." This was a happy event for us also and Jim thought our family was complete. But two years later in December, 1952, we had another very happy event. Our first daughter, Betty Vera was born.

The next summer, 1953 the people of the whole area were greatly shocked and saddened by the accidental death of Dr. Gurth O'Brian. His passing was so tragic to us, when Mum passed away suddenly in October with a heart attack. Dr. O'Brian knew and understood her trouble and we felt he could have helped her.

In May, 1957 our second daughter, Bonny Ann was born and then, I felt our family was complete. We were so fortunate to get two of each. That summer with a new baby, hired man to cook and wash for, and everything else there was to do, I used to wonder if I was going to survive it all.

One year Jim developed an alergy to grain dust and couldn't take the crop off as he was right in bed with a weeping exzema. Fred Mailey came and ran the combine that fall. Another year Eddie Crerar had to take over when Jim couldn't finish. He had to try to keep out of the grain dust so tried to buy a cab for his combine, but they weren't making them then. Jim built an air conditioned cab of his own on the combine and so could continue to farm. Some of the other fellows that worked for us were Wilfred Murphy, Eldon Wertz, Mike Potrebenko, Bill Pallard, Eddie Paul and others.

Jim loved the farm and made a success of farming. He bought more new machinery as we needed and could afford it. In 1955 he grew the wheat that his Dad won the World Wheat King prize for. Jim thought we were very lucky to be living in this country and said so many times. He was very proud that he was born here and was quite disappointed when we were arranging with Rev. Kitney to get married, to find that I wasn't born here.

In April, 1961 Jim's mother passed away. Two years later we moved into the big house to live with Jim's dad who had had a stroke and wasn't to live alone any more. That was another summer I wondered if I would ever survive and get the work finished. Jim put the indoor plumbing in the house so that helped. In October, Jim's dad went to stay with his daughter, Ruth Atkins in Toronto for the winter. Jim started going to doctors for health reasons. In April, 1964 just after his dad returned home it was discovered in an operation in Edmonton that Jim had cancer. Before Jim could come home his dad had a stroke and was taken to Grande Prairie hospital. With the exception of a short stay in Edmonton hospital, he remained there till he passed away in July, 1965. Lelia and Irwin Agar came from Vernon and stayed with us that spring till after the crop was in.

Jim had gotten out a set of logs for a cabin a few years before. That fall when he decided where he wanted the cabin, Ray Smuland and Stan Griffiths came three or four weekends and built it. Jim's illness steadily worsened till he passed away on October 28. I'm very grateful to relatives and friends for their kindness through that difficult period.

My brother Fred Ford and his wife Betty and daughter Anne had moved up from Bezanson to live in the smaller house that summer and he took over running the farm. I'm ever indebted to them for their comfort and help at that time. They took care of the family when Gordon and Verna Crowe took Myrtle, Janet and I on a trip to the coast the next spring. Fred stayed on running the farm till the fall of 1966 for which I was so thankful as the boys were older then and could take over, we hoped!

After Mr. Cochrane passed away, his daughters, Jean Forbes of Edmonton and Ruth Atkins of Toronto became the owners of his homestead which is S.E.¼ 18-72-5-6 and Bob Binks rents this land.

In February, 1967 Ted Gammon and I were married. That same year my son Bob married Donalda Metz and they have three children; Tammy,

Jamie and Trina. Betty married Dave Miller in December, 1974 and they have one boy Justin. Bonny married Gregg LaValley in March, 1975.

Ted Gammon was born at Olds, 1910 and was transferred with the Royal Bank to Grande Prairie in 1936 where he worked at different branches. He married Betty Eagar in 1940 and served four years in the Air Force. Ted joined a partnership with Gordon Wilson in Thomson Motors in 1947 and also served on the Grande Prairie School Board for nearly 20 years. They had three children; Barbara, Jim and Susan. His wife Betty died in a car accident in March, 1963 and Susan passed away in December, 1974. Daughter Barbara Geyer and family and son Jim and family live in Edmonton.

Bob, Donna and family live in the house we built and the boys farm the two sections 13 and 14-72-5-6 and S.E.¼ 23. Bill lives with Ted and I in the big house on the Cochrane Farm where four generations of Cochranes have lived.

COCHRANE (JEAN FORBES) — "REMINISCING" — by Jean Cochrane Forbes

My parents, Jennie Agar and Robert Cochrane were both born in Ontario. They met in North Dakota where they had been living and were married in December, 1906. They left there to make a home in Winnipeg, where my father was in the construction business.



Moores and Cochranes leaving Edmonton for the Peace River Country, February, 1911.

In 1910 they decided to leave for the Peace River country. My father had heard from an Indian he had met in North Dakota that Mr. Bedson, the Hudson's Bay factor at Dunvegan was growing tomatoes. He had also heard of the Peace River country from Klondikers he had met in Winnipeg and North Dakota. They went to Grande Prairie in a democrat with Nellie and Jim Moore and son Alex via the Klondike Trail. After looking the country over, my parents decided to ride horseback back to Edmonton. They stopped at Grouard to file on the land and awaited the arrival of the Moores there before proceeding to Edmonton. It should be noted that my father carried a pail on his arm all the way from Grande Prairie to Edmonton as his father had always watered his Clydesdale horses, imported from Scotland, from a trough or pail. One evening after he had brought a pail of water to their camp and gone back to the stream he noticed a flare in the sky from the camp fire. Upon going back found my mother had dipped her head in the water because the celluloid comb in her hair had exploded as she was leaning over near the fire plucking a prairie chicken. The scab did not come off until Christmas day. This was my mother's first horseback ride and was written up in the Edmonton Daily Bulletin, October 25, 1910, issue, "Rode Five Hundred Miles Horseback." The story tells something of their three month journey, acquiring the four scrips and homestead, and plans to return with the Moores in January by the winter trail, taking with them eight oxen, four horses and a complete set of farming implements.

They left Edmonton, February 3, 1911 and arrived on their land March 17, 1911. They camped in the bluff until their first cabin was built of dry poplar and the lumber frames made from knocked-down freight racks. This cabin was built on the West section. During the summer my father built a frame house across the road on the East section just south of where the brick house is. This house was built in 1931-32. Before it was finished, the log cabin burned with most of their supplies. They thought they would have to leave the country but the neighbors helped so they could remain. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Carveth gave them a good cook stove which is now in the Beaverlodge museum. Herbert MacIntyre and other neighbors divided their kitchen dishes and cutlery so they were able to carry on housekeeping. The frame house was finished by August. My father was able to do all the carpentry work himself as he had brought in a circular saw, a couple of mandels made a hand power saw that two men could operate. He had several cases of window glass and also made windows for the neighbors.

On August 14, 1912 I was born in the frame house with Dr. Annie Higbee in attendance and nurse Rebecca Agar assisting. Rebecca was Mother's first cousin who had promised her, while in Winnipeg that if she ever had a baby she would come to help her, which she did. She came by way of Edson to Grande Prairie riding horseback for the first time in her life.

On May 24, 1914 my sister Ruth was born. It must have been a happy time for me having a baby sister. We started school together in the fall of 1919. Although



Jean and Ruth Cochrane.

the Kleskun Lake School had been built in 1912, my father having the contract, it was decided that the late Herbert MacIntyres scrip shack would be used for a classroom that term as it was centrally located. It was located about where Mr. and Mrs. Bill Wendts home is today. Herbert MacIntyre had been killed at the Battle of Ypres. The log cabin was prepared for a classroom by cleaning and placing a blackboard on the wall. Our desks had been made by my father and the teachers desk had been bought from money collected at the Christmas concert at Kleskun Lake School the year my Aunt Edna Agar taught there 1912-1913. Our first teacher was Mr. George Hamilton. He failed to return after the Easter vacation and never gave the school board his reason. Perhaps it was because we used to play on the west side of the hill so we could not hear the bell and he would have to come for us. However, Clara Turner took the class until the end of that term.

In the fall 1922, we started attending the Kleskun Lake School three miles away. Gladys Clarkson, our teacher, boarded at our home, so drove us to the school with our favorite horse "Frank". The school was bright with windows along the East side, cloakrooms at the front and woodshed built at the back. Besides the hand made desks, there was an organ which had been given to the school by Mr. and Mrs. John Harris and had been brought into the country over the Edson Trail. There were two large pictures on the wall, a copy of "Sir Lancelot" and another copy of Rosa Bonheurs "Horse Fair". There was a case of minerals which had been collected by Herbert MacIntyre when he and his brother Temple had been in Alaska. A plaque made from copper from Nelsons ship hung on the wall also. It had been presented to the school in honor of it being the first school in that area. There was a cupboard against the north wall where library books were kept and of course there was a huge barrel heater. Drinking water was in a crock fountain. At the back of the property was a barn for the horses, boys and girls toilet on either side of the barn and to the west side was the huge woodpile. We used to play on Turners hill on the road at noon in the winter using handsleds and we skated on a slough south of the school.

There was much preparation for the annual Christmas concert. Mrs. Frank Turner gave generously of her time in preparing the pupils for the musical part of the program. She also helped my sister Ruth and me with our musical festival work.

My brother Jim was born on February 26, 1916 with Dr. Annie Higbee attending, also Mrs. Annie Newton assisting and staying on for a time to help in many kind ways. Jim started school in 1922 at Kleskun Lake, so the three of us went to school together. After the teacher, Mr. T. G. Irwin who boarded with us left, we had to drive to school ourselves. We appreciated having David Turner take our team when we arrived, put the horses in the barn and again later get the horses hooked up for the drive home. One day we left home without realizing it was so cold and the Frank Turner family kept us overnight. It had been sixty below without a wind. On occasion our horse "Frank" would get colic and kindly Frank Turner would prepare a bottle of ginger powder with sugar and water to give him. This relieved him of his discomfort.

We always enjoyed the drive home via the hills, for we would see the occasional deer, coyote and numerous rabbits. In the spring, we delighted to hear the first robins cheerful song. The meadowlark too was around. There seemed to be many red-headed woodpeckers. I have recently learned that what we called the Prairie Chicken was the Sharp-tailed grouse that inhabited that area. I have seen these birds going round and round, ten to fifteen birds in a circle flattening down the grass. In the fall they fed on the blueberries. The ducks were plentiful and did great damage to the crops around Clairmont Lake especially. We would see large flocks of Canada Geese going north to nest, then in the fall they would stop awhile to rest and feed before flying south for the winter. The Sandhill Crane would be seen flying high in the sky, with its long outstretched legs. Of course we always admired the beautiful Trumpeter Swans who nested around Clairmont Lake and still do.

My parents had difficulty in finding well water on the farm so we had the well drillers come every summer, without success until finally after about the seventh well they struck water. They had been hauling water in a tank from Macs' spring west of the MacIntyre scrip, on the west side of the hill all those years!

In the winter they used to melt snow which was a real chore. I can remember the excitement around the community when Cochranes got water! When this well proved to have a sufficient supply of water, my parents decided to build a new house. The foundation



Jean, Ruth and Jim Cochrane — 1919.

material used was native field stone, which is very colorful and was found in the area. The brick used for the walls came from the Dalen brick making plant south of Grande Prairie. The house was wired for electric power, so we were not using the kerosene lamps anymore — no lamp chimneys to be polished each day! The view from this home sight is wonderful in that the country can be seen far to the mountains and south and east to the rivers and timber country.

Power from a windmill was used to pump water from this well. It was a sad day for my father, years later when the windmill had to be discontinued when the power line came, in favor of power from a motor. He injured a finger badly in an accident with the belt. This made a difference to his hobby of carving juniper roots into pieces of sculpture, also in the making of violins of which he had made thirteen. He had presented Betty Jean Hagen, renowned violinist, with the best one he had made.

Mother used to take Ruth, Jim and me in the buggy with "Frank" to pick saskatoons. We always enjoyed rambling on the hills. One time we painted our straw hats and faces with saskatoon juice! We went to Brookbanks at Bezanson with the Lukers from Buffalo Lakes to pick blueberries. My sister Ruth and cousin Dorothy Luker will recall that trip, for at the end of the day, their pails were empty. The strawberries must have been real plentiful the year Sir Henry Thorton spoke to a group of people at Kleskun Hill, for the ladies served wild strawberries to the official party.

Two Scottish brothers, Dave and John Duncan helped on the farm for several years. Dave married and had a family. They later settled on the north side of the Peace. Ola Moen came from Norway to friends in the Teepee Creek area, and later came to help on the farm. My brother Jim taught him English. He later married Helen and had two sons and a daughter, making a success of farming in the Teepee Creek district. He is now retired in Grande Prairie and his sons have their farm. Lawrence Rasmussen came from Denmark to Quebec to work awhile, before coming to Grande Prairie to work on my parents farm. He later married Julia, from Denmark and they settled in the Valleyview district and farmed successfully, raising a family of three daughters and a son. I remember one fall the weather was very wet. Lawrence and Ola had a hard time with the binders getting plugged with mud. It was hard for the men and horses.

In the fall of the year at threshing time the farmers organized a beef ring so fresh meat was available as each member took his turn in butchering a young steer or pig. During threshing time my father often hired native people from Sturgeon Lake. They set up their tents on the west section by the willows and had their families with them. Some of the families who came were the Calliou, Gladue and Desroliers families. We learned a few Cree words from them. Dad told about the time Mrs. Shortread came to help Mother one fall in the house at threshing time. Dad was trying to hurry Mrs. Shortread with getting the meal on the table and she exclaimed, "Bob, I always had time to clean my teeth at the last place I worked!"

Walter Rothwell was a stock buyer living near Clairmont. He came from close to where my father was raised in Ontario so they were good friends. He was very kind to us as children, used to play games with us and whenever he went "outside" which was the expression for going to Edson or Edmonton, would bring us gifts.

Mother and I went to the Musical Festival at Peace River in 1927 with the Judsons. We stayed two days and enjoyed the trip. I played in the violin class and my teacher Mr. Axel Hedman was there from Grande Prairie along with some of his other pupils. He had a violin orchestra which was very well received by the community.

Our family always enjoyed trips to Beaverlodge. We went to the Field Days at the Experimental Station, visiting the W. D. Albright family and many other friends who would attend. When the railway came to Beaverlodge, we were there for the celebration. I remember the late Bruce Albrights great delight in seeing the first passenger approaching and coming to a stop. He exclaimed "My! Didn't that train come in fast!" The Beaverlodge residents waited many years after the train service came to Grande Prairie to get rail service. The passenger train used to stop to let people who needed hospital care, off at the crossing by the Grande Prairie Hospital until 1911.

During the great depression many men could be seen riding the rails. Families were seen coming into the country with wagons and horses during the "Dust Bowl" years. Often men would call at our house for a meal while on their way looking for work. No one was ever turned away hungry.



Jean (Forbes) and Ruth (Atkins) Cochrane.

One time, Ruth and I went to the Sports Day at Debolt and that same evening Frank Stevenson took us to his homestead by team and wagon for a visit with his wife and their first baby. The mosquitoes were the worst I ever experienced, but we had a wonderful visit. I hope something has been written about Edna Stevenson and her good work in her community. She was a graduate nurse from Prince Edward Island and performed a great health service in that district. Our family always enjoyed the times Frank would stay overnight at our house on his way back to Debolt for that was a long trip with the horses in those days. Once Frank's dog killed my brother Jim's pet white rabbit.

Jim cried himself to sleep and in the morning said, "I guess I have cried myself out."

Since my parents acquired the land in 1910 there have been three generations of the Cochrane family living on the property. My nephews, Robert and William farm nine quarter sections. A part of the land is still prairie soil that has not been cultivated. My sister Ruth Atkins and I own the homestead. It has a suitable landmark — a stone decorated with the Alberta Wild Rose on white background. The elevation 2420 feet is painted on the rock. This was decorated by friends Verna Crowe and Myrtle McLaughlin.

After attending high school in Grande Prairie, I went to Vermilion, Alberta to the Vermilion School of Agriculture and Home Economics. In 1940 I married Gordon Forbes whom I met when he was teaching at Kleskun Lake School and Clairmont High School. Following World War II, we lived in Winnipeg where Gordon attended the University of Manitoba school of Architecture. We have two children, Harry Gordon and Shirley Jean, both of whom live in Toronto.

COCHRANE (RUTH ATKINS) — I REMEMBER

The Edmonton Bulletin, October 25, 1910 wrote "To Ride 500 miles on horseback is a feat which requires strength and endurance, but such a journey has just been completed by Mrs. Robert Cochrane, who accompanied by her husband arrived in the city last week. It took 16 days and although Mrs. Cochrane is somewhat shaken up and tired, she is otherwise none the worse for her journey."

The paper related the accident when my mother's celluloid comb exploded while she was plucking a prairie chicken before a camp fire. (Pioneer of the Peace.) The scars on her head did not heal for a long time and hair didn't grow back until Christmas.

On that trip "out" by an old Indian trail to Sturgeon Lake and Grouard, they nearly upset while crossing the Smoky River in Bezanson's boat. One of the horses swam too high and tried to crawl into the boat. On this trip a moose challenged my mother's horse for a time, a frightening experience.

The Bulletin concluded its article "In January both families (Moores and Cochranes) will return to Grande Prairie by the winter trail, taking with them eight oxen, four horses and a complete outfit of farming equipment.

My parents, Jennie and Robert Cochrane heard so many glowing stories about the Peace River country that they decided to leave Winnipeg and filed on scrips ten miles northeast of Grande Prairie in 1910. See book "Pioneers of the Peace".

I was born on May 24, 1914 and my mother delivered me by herself and cut the cord. My sister Jean, 21 months old, had been taken to the farmyard by a fourteen year old helper, Edna Graham. My father arrived shortly after with Dr. A. Higbee and Mrs. Carveth. Jean can remember our Uncle Irwin taking us outdoors when my brother Jim was born February 26, 1916. Mrs. Annie Newton was in attendance at the delivery. She helped in some 80 cases during her active years.

We had to haul water from the spring on MacIntyres' hill, a stoneboat being one way of hauling barrels of water. Snow was melted in the winter time. Four dams were dug at various times and a garden was planted near one of them. Finally in 1927 a well 470 feet deep was drilled and that was a happy day when water was struck. A windmill was erected. The old granite dipper or cup was taken from the water barrel and hung on the pump at the well.

Children made their own fun. We had a wonderful horse Frank and quite often the three of us rode him. If one fell off the way to mount him again was by way of the barbed wire fence.

We started school in MacIntyres' log cabin north of our farm and used slates not scribblers. I have my pencil box received May 24, 1921 which my father made. The printing on it was made by holding a magnifying glass in the bright sunshine. Our horses were so used to being driven every day to the school that they could be hitched up and went alone turning out for other sleighs. They stopped in front of the cabin for us. In the spring they wandered off the road to forage for grass so they could not be depended upon as previously.

We raised silver foxes for a time and some grew very tame coming up to the bars. I lost my beads one day. We had turkeys, geese and rabbits and had our pet calves and pigs. Every spring the barn swallows were among the annual migratory birds. The big snowy owl frequented the farmyard. It was common to hear their hoot during our evening chores — the cutting of wood and milking of cows. Wood was piled high and there were lots of mice for the owls and hawks. Weasels were seen and one had to watch the chickens from attack. If the geese were not put in every evening one would be carried off by a coyote. They had dens on the hill and in the summer we could hear the pups calling with their adults, especially on a moonlight night.

Saskatoons were plentiful and picked into lard pails. Homemade combs were used to pick blueberries and the leaves were removed by putting the berries through a fanning mill. We could pick wild strawberries some summers. I remember our family going with the Turners to the Burnt Hills to spend a day or so picking raspberries.

It was quite a trip to Sturgeon Lake where white fish were plentiful. One usually got stuck on some of the corduroy roads. We sometimes went on picnics and my mother cooked prairie chicken over the campfire. I understand that these were not the Greater Prairie Chicken — Pinnated Grouse Tympanuchus cupido. The Calgary Herald September 17, 1904 reported "Bags of 200 - 300 chickens are being brought in".

We drove a buggy to the Kleskun Lake School No. 2743 and went by way of the spring on MacIntyres' Hill. I remember the wonderful smell of the Balm of Gilead trees which grew thick on either side of the narrow road. There were many birds and we looked for their nests. In the winter we took a shorter route below Mac's hill. The rabbits were plentiful and some winters we occasionally saw a coyote or red fox. Bears also had dens on the hill.

My parents made our moccasins and outer mits and I liked the soft bear fur ones best. Bricks were heated to keep our feet warm and we sometimes wore felt shoes. The robes were kept warm in the school and bricks reheated for the going home journey. I

remember the day that the water pail fell off the barrel type stove and my leg was scalded through long underwear and black woollen stockings.

The Christmas concert was an exciting event and much work went into it. Mrs. Frank Turner played the organ and helped the teacher with the music. The pupils entered from the crowded cloakroom and performed on a built up stage. After Santa helped to present candies and gifts, usually bought from Eaton's catalogue, lunch was served. Coffee was brewed in a boiler on the stove. Mr. Ewart Ellis was a great fiddler and played for the dance. Sometimes we were treated to the awesome beauty of another dance on our way home, that of the Northern Lights. The glowing embers from the wood fire through the mica windows of the heater welcomed us. We were all sure that was the best concert ever!

Harvest time was an exciting period and meant terrific work for the women. Neighbors helped each other when the crew started the operation. Farmers had to be able to repair parts when breakdowns occurred as every dry sunny hour counted in such a brief time. What wonderful meals I remember!

Saturday was going to town day for shopping and music lessons. I took piano from Mrs. Harry Clifford then Mrs. Barbara Smith. Jean took violin from Mr. Axel Hedman and Jim, guitar from Mr. George Tate. The horses were fed in Dunlop's livery barn. Our robes were kept warm in the office and the bricks were reheated on the stove for the return home. The horses seemed to quicken their pace the last half mile and it was always good to see the light from the coal oil lamp burning in the window. That homemade soup tasted so good with a slice of Mother's freshly baked bread. We took eggs and sometimes the odd chicken to sell and bought groceries from Morrisons' store. Theirs was the meeting place or Thomsons' Hardware across the street.

I often wonder how my mother care for her sister Edna Agar who arrived from the trail in a delirious state with typhoid fever. No one else got the disease during the long period of recovery.

My parents told us how the neighbors rallied to help them when their shack burned in 1911 such as giving a stove, dividing the dishes and cutlery. They were outfitted again in short order.

I hope that someone will write about Grandma Turner (Mrs. Lorenzo) who attended many women in childbirth, set some fractures and generally acted "Doctor."

One has so many memories like the box social dances and the hall, sports events, picnics at Dinosaur Park, into which my father put much effort into its establishment in 1946. I remember the carnival when Hilda Clifford was crowned "Queen". I can hear those beautiful bells as Mr. and Mrs. George Young proudly drove their fine team down the street.

One got the same thrill seeing Ewart Ellis ride one of his horses. The musicians of the Brass Band were warmly seated on a big flat sleigh as they proceeded through town.

Grain had to be hauled many miles to the elevators. It was common to see men walking behind their sleighs clapping their hands to keep warm as the sleigh runners made a crunching noise in the snow. That familiar arch in the western sky and old "Teepee" showing up in the foothills was a welcome sight to those men — It would be warmer tomorrow!

During the terrible floods during 1935, three of us, Eloise MacDiarmid, Betty McQuarrie, and I could not get back to the University Hospital following vacation. We were thrilled to be able to sit on mail bags on a little plane, piloted by Mr. Lee Brintnell taking off from Bear Lake and landing on Cooking Lake near Edmonton.

One weekend in early years, Helen Hedman and Mary Thomson were visiting us and my Dad was telling about some boy who had been up to some mischief. "What will he ever become?" asked my dad. One of the girls answered "He'll be, he'll be, he'll be a farmer." My Dad never forgot that. As I look back, it was good to have grown up on a farm.

Spring always brought one chore, that of cleaning stovepipes on a fine windless day. That same day might have brought the mighty Trumpeters which still claim Peace River their home.

The fall brought the Canada Geese at sunset to rest in our grainfields overnight. I remember having seen a lynx once, and Jim was with me. We ran home scared that time. Turners had a lynx once.

We helped pick over seed in the fall before samples were sent to Royal Winter Fair and I was not fussy about that chore.

The Carveths and my parents had a telephone hooked up on the fence line before the government system was started.

When I think of what the pioneers endured to settle the Peace I am reminded of a letter to me from Judge Jack Sissons in 1966. He stated "Lord Tweedsmuir once declared that he found the pioneer at his best in the Peace and that he was a man that really possessed his soul." "Your father and I fought happily together in many a battle for the rights and development of the Peace River Country and I could never forget those days. They did much to train me for my struggles in the North."

My husband Walter and I met in Edmonton where he was taking Mining Engineering at the University of Alberta and I trained for a nurse at the University Hospital. We have lived in Toronto for 21 years. Our daughter Marjorie (Mrs. Cam Robertson) lives in Ottawa and our son Lynn lives in Kamloops. We have two grandsons, David and Kevin Robertson.

Respectfully submitted, Ruth Cochrane Atkins.

ALLAN AND SHIRLEY CHUGG — by Shirley Chugg

On September 1, 1946, I, (Shirley Colton) came to Grande Prairie by train with my mother, Mrs. Emeline Colton, from High Prairie, where I had just graduated from high school. We were met by Mrs. Olive Kuykendall to take us to the Twilight School Teacherage, two miles north of Richmond Avenue, four miles east of the present Gulf Service Station, and one-half mile north. At the school site there was the school, a two-room teacherage, a coal shed and a barn. Our water supply was a pump on an underground cistern. The school was heated by wood and coal and

the floors of hardwood were just oiled twice a year for upkeep. I was the janitor of the school too.

At this time, due to a shortage of teachers, schools were opened with supervisors who helped the children with correspondence courses. These courses were mailed to head office in Edmonton, but our work was supervised by the Country Superintendent. My first superintendent was Mr. Johnson, then Mr. Stan Hambly, who visited our schools and checked the students and our way of handling the school. I appreciated Mr. Hambly very much.

When school opened, I had the following students: Lyle Kuykendall, William Wendt, James Oatway, Carol Wendt, Lenora Maile, Robert Wendt, Helen Wendt, Grace Kuykendall, William Maile, Jean Carveth, and Neil Wendt. In December, the two Maile children went to British Columbia. The older students put a real effort into their lessons, and Carol Wendt completed her grade seven and eight in one year, so in the fall of 1947, all four students were in grade nine, and I was proud to see some of them make their grade nine Provincial exams with an 'A' standing.

Although there were few students, we put on a Christmas concert, and Mrs. Jack Oatway came and played the piano for us. At the close of school in June, we had a school picnic with the whole community participating. Some of the children took part in the annual track meet in Grande Prairie and, in the fall, we would have a pie social and games to raise money for Christmas treats for the children. The community also held dances in the schools.

Staying alone in a two-room teacherage with the wood stoves was an experience. I had the most wonderful neighbors in the Gene Kuykendalls, Jack Oatways, Rupert and Gerald Carveths, and Herman Wendts. There was always someone bringing garden vegetables, eggs, homemade bread and all kinds of meat. This will always be remembered. Another very important person in my life was the faithful mailman, who traveled by car in the summer and a team of horses and sleigh in the winter. At that time, it was George Small Sr., of R.R.I., Grande Prairie.

The children either walked or rode horseback to school. In winter, the Wendt children came by team and sleigh with as many as could skiing behind, and the smaller children riding in the sleigh box.

Gene Kuykendall used to tell the single school marm he would have to introduce her to the Chugg boys. Well, after a year, he did, and this is how I met Allan Chugg. So, after pursuing the teacher by car, horseback, skiing, or team and cutter, whichever the weather permitted, Allan and I were married, on June 30, 1948.

Elmer and Allan purchased the Ewart Ellis place in the Kleskun Lake School District, in fact the school yard was on our property. In the fall of 1948, I took over the Kleskun Lake School and supervised the school until the end of December, when we were able to get a teacher, Miss Wallace. At this time, there were three Edward children; Loreen, Randy and Donald; three Carter children; Richard, Pauline and Norman; Johnny Graham, Shirley Remple, Michael DeMaine, Allan Langdon, and Teddy Packnoski.

Allan and Elmer farmed together for seven years, their own three quarters and the Ward Estate half, joining us on the west. It wasn't long till the small country schools were closed down, and we purchased the Kleskun Lake School and moved it to our farm, put it on a foundation and converted it to a shop and garage. In 1955, Elmer was married, Allan and I and our three children remained on the Ellis' farm and eventually Elmer purchased his father's farm. Due to poor health, Allan subdivided the home quarter to a fifty acre corner where the building site was. In 1962, we built a new home there, and sold the rest of the land to Alvin Dodds.

In February of 1965, Wayne Kenneth joined our family by adoption. In October of that year, we sold the fifty acres to Steve Kapsos, and we moved into Grande Prairie. After seven years of city life, we purchased the Fred Rotenburg farm, where we are presently residing, east of Grande Prairie.

Our children all attended Harry Balfour School. Wes graduated, took a computer course in Vancouver, and married Marion Walker of Saskatoon where they now reside. Marion is a librarian at the University of Saskatchewan and Wes is employed by Canadian Tire.

Alice is a registered nursing aide, working at the Royal Alec Hospital. She married Normand Bilodeau from Vimy, Alberta. He is employed by the City of Edmonton. They have one son, Eugene.

Gerald graduated from high school, went to N.A.I.T. and is in construction in Grande Prairie. He married Brenda de Roaldes of Grande Prairie. Brenda graduated the same year as Gerald and is a secretary for Procter and Gamble.

Wayne is at home attending Harry Balfour and loves his country life.

All of the different areas mentioned and the people mean very much to Allan and I and our family. It is a great place to live because our neighbors have been the best.



Allan and Shirley Chugg. Wes and Marion's wedding — 1976 — Norm and Alice Bilodeau, Wayne, Gerald and Brenda.

EDGAR AND MARY CHUGG — by Mary Chugg

We moved from the Vulcan area, in southern Alberta, to the Clairmont area, in March of 1929. Edgar was up in the fall of 1928 and bought the north half of 26-72-5-W. 6th, five miles east of Clairmont. Kellets had homesteaded the south half, and the north half was south African scrips, so had never been improved. They had the first office of the Grande Prairie municipality in their home.

On March 12, 1929, Edgar along with his brother Bill, arrived in Clairmont with two boxcars of settlers' effects, including horses, cattle, chickens and our dog and cat. On March 15, I arrived with out family of seven; Ruby, Annie, Elmer, Allan, Norman, Evelyn and Laura. Edgar had made arrangements in the fall for us to move on to the Waller place north of the land he bought. We lived there for two years while we were clearing and breaking the land on our own. Edgar rented land to farm in the meantime.

Our children attended Kleskun Lake School. We moved on to our own place the spring of 1931, so they had one mile to go to school. As the older children finished grade school, they went to high school in Clairmont, and later to the Grande Prairie high school.

In June, 1937, we had a new baby girl, Luella Alice. In 1949, the Kleskun Lake School closed so we semi-retired to Grande Prairie so Luella could go to school. By this time, the older children were on their own.

In 1939, Ruby, our oldest, married John Remple of Grande Prairie. He later spent four and one-half years in the Army; two and one-half years overseas. They have five children; Shirley, who is a registered nurse, married Michael Yakimets, pharmacist at Fort Saskatchewan. They have two girls; Barbara and Laurie. Larry married Phyllis Kolibaba from Peace River. They were at Whitehorse, but are now making their home in Vernon. They have four children; Ann, Curtis, Jo and Shauna. Ruth lives in Toronto and works for the Government. Dorothy married Ron Mulligan. They live near Wembley with their three children; Greg, Karen and Theresa. Jean, the youngest daughter, just graduated from high school and has been employed in Grande Prairie. Annie was a bookkeeper before she married Dick Jacobson in 1957. They have two children; Kathleen and Carl. Their home is in Vernon. Elmer, our oldest son, married Bertha Presho of Athabasca, in November, 1955. They bought our farm in 1960 when we retired, then later, bought the Herman Wendt farm, four and one-half miles east of the four-mile corner. They farm; Elmer works for Peace Farm Power and Bertha nurses part-time. They have five children; Michael is attending the University of Alberta, Bradford and Katharine are in high school and Leslie and Wendy are in grade school. Norman served in active duty in the Army, prior to attending Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills. After graduation in 1950, he married Jeannette Remboldt of Everett, Washington. The following spring, they went to Venezuela, South America, as missionaries with Team Missions, where they are still serving. They had seven children. Carol, who passed away in Grande Prairie at the age of five. Margaret, Allan and Lois, all graduated from Prairie Bible Institute at Three Hills. Margaret married Philip Schmidt of Vanderhoof. Allan works in Vanderhoof and Lois has returned to Venezuela as a missionary. Ronald is in his second year at P.B.I. and Paul and Carmen are in school in Venezuela.

Evelyn, our third daughter, lives in Seattle, where she has been employed for several years. She obtained her degree in Insurance Underwriting.

Laura trained as a nurse in Victoria. She married Stan Magill in June, 1951. Stan was manager of Co-op Implements until the time of his death in March, 1976. They have four children; Joyce is an Occupational Therapist in Edmonton. Hugh works for Internal Revenue in Calgary. Dale wants to farm and is attending Agriculture College in Fairview. Laurie is still at home.

Luella received her education in Grande Prairie. She married Ken Hillmer, from Penticton in September, 1958. They are in Edmonton where Ken is the Minister of Strathcona Baptist Church. They have four children; Judy, Karen, Douglas and David. All the children are at home and going to school.

We celebrated our golden wedding anniversary on August 7, 1968, with all of our children, their children and relatives. Edgar passed away in October of 1969. I still make my home in Grande Prairie.

DUNCAN, JAMES

My parents died in Scotland in the early 1920's. There were four children in our family; one sister and three brothers. My sister still lives in Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

My uncle, Donald McPherson, came to this country from Aberdeen, Scotland in the 1900's. In 1910, he homesteaded on the quarter of land, where we now live.

Donald served in World War I, then returned to the homestead and, a few years later, married Miss Mary Edemson of Forfer, Scotland. They went into mixed farming. In 1945, they retired to Nanaimo, B.C., where they lived until their deaths.

My brother, George and I decided to come to my Uncle's place, we arrived in Clairmont, June 15, 1928. All that Clairmont had for a station was an old railway car. I worked around Clairmont and in the spring of 1930, George and I started farming in a small way, east of Sexsmith, and for the next ten years, Sexsmith was our home town. In the hungry thirties, I did not hear of anyone dying of hunger, but the old stomach got pretty gaunt at times.

We took turns going to the bush to work. We usually logged by contract; the mill owner got 60% of the logs, we got 40%. When the logs were sawed, we were lucky if we could find a buyer at $10 a thousand for the lumber.

The war broke out and after harvest that year, I went to Edmonton to visit some of the boys who had joined the army. I joined the 49th Edmonton Regiment, three weeks before Christmas. I had Christmas dinner on the high seas. I was with the 49th Regiment throughout the war and we left Holland the morning after armistice was signed. I got my discharge in July, 1945.



Mr. and Mrs. Donald McPherson.

My Uncle had sold his farm to the V.L.A. and I took the farm over. Adjusting was hard, and with batching, it was worse, but I got acquainted and married Ella Jantz. From then on, I had a great partner to help me over the rough spots that lay ahead; such as hail, frost and snowed-under crops. Through it all, we got a good mixed farm going and raised nine healthy children. Five are married and we have ten grandchildren. Norma lives at Elmworth, Margaret in Calgary, Kathie, Tom, Patricia, Heather, and Donald in Grande Prairie. Terry and Bonnie are still at home. Norma went to school in Clairmont. Alex Murchie had a stationwagon and that was their first school bus. The rest of the children went to school in Sexsmith.

Our old house was about ready to fall into the cellar, so, in 1967, we built a new house and did most of the work ourselves, under the supervision of Carl Pettersson, our neighbour.

With going to calf clubs, sewing clubs and being involved in many different organizations in the district, it has been a busy life, but a good one.

MR. AND MRS. EWART ALPHONSE ELLIS

Mr. Ewart Ellis was born in Barrie, Ontario, March 6th, 1895, but spent his early boyhood in Lockwood, Saskatchewan. In 1911, Ewart and his brother, Edgar, still in their teens, traveled, with four oxen, over the old Grouard Trail to the Peace River country. They filed on homestead land, two miles west of Clairmont, at that time.

In 1919, Ewart sold his homestead and purchased the S.½ 28-72-5-W. 6th, which was the homestead land of Mr. C. F. Twombly, four miles east of Clairmont. He later bought the S.W. 27-72-5-W. 6th, which was the adjoining Fishbourne quarter on which the Kleskun Lake school was situated. Later on, he leased the N.E. 28-72-5-W. 6th, from the Edward Ward estate. (Mr. Ward, original owner of the quarter, was killed in a run-away accident, on his binder in the early 1920's.)

A small frame house was moved to the homesite from Clairmont, and on December 17, 1919, Ewart and his bride, the former Marjorie Clark, of Grande Prairie, moved into this house.



Edna Turner, Jean and Helen Ellis.

Marjorie Ellis was the eldest daughter of James D. Clark, who homesteaded land two miles east of Grande Prairie, in 1911. Mr. Clark, originally from New Brunswick, moved his wife and eleven children, from South Edmonton, to his homestead, in 1914. They traveled over the Edson Trail with two horse-outfits, and drove ten head of cattle over the trail as well. Marjorie, the first stenographer in Grande Prairie, worked in the land office and Union Bank prior to her marriage.

Mixed farming operations were carried on over the years, growing mainly wheat and oats and raising horses, cattle, and pigs. Ewart also operated one of the first threshing outfits in the district — complete with a cook car and cook, to feed the men on the crew as they moved from farm to farm to thresh. Horses were used to haul the sheaves on a rack to the threshing machine. In winter, the grain was hauled to the elevator in Clairmont, with a four-horse team on a grain box.

Ewart Ellis was a great lover of horses and, during the years on the farm, he always had at least one good harness horse. Names like 'Dolly S', 'Nellie C', 'Dixie Boy', 'Lady Onward', and 'Joe Tyler' were well known at the local race meets. 'Joe Tyler' and 'Lady Onward', both pacers, provided lively transportation for the Ellis family when they were driven as a team on a cutter.

Ewart and Marjorie Ellis had two daughters; Jean, born in 1921, and Helen, born in 1922.

When Jean started school at Kleskun Lake in 1928, she walked to school with Billy Duncan, a neighbor boy who had just arrived from Scotland to live with his aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Donald MacPherson. Later in the year, she rode her first school pony, a Shetland named 'Mischief'. When Helen started school in 1929, the two girls rode double on an old Indian pony named 'Flashlight'. 'Flashlight', and a good lariat, had been acquired for about a total of $4.00; but she was

worth her weight in gold to those two girls. Both Jean and Helen attended Kleskun school, until the spring of 1936.



Jean and Helen Ellis on their horses. The year the crops were in the field all winter.



Ewart Ellis and pacing mare 'Dolly S'.

During the summer of 1936, the Ellis family moved to Grande Prairie where Mr. Ellis operated a livery stable. A few years later, he sold his farm land east of Clairmont to Mr. Allen Chugg.

Ewart Ellis passed away suddenly in Calgary, May 18, 1955, at the age of 59 years. Marjorie Ellis and her daughter, Helen, still reside in Grande Prairie. Jean, now Mrs. George Reid of Edmonton, has three daughters; Mrs. Janet Berube and Beverly Reid, of Edmonton, and Mrs. Linda Fald, of Westerose, Alberta. Janet Berube has one son, Ken. Linda Fald has two daughters; Tresa and Karen.

LAWRENCE FISHBURN

Lawrence Fishburn was a bachelor who was from the Carolinas, U.S.A. He was a well educated man. His homestead was the S.W. 27-72-5-W. 6th. He ploughed his fields with a team of oxen. He donated the plot on the southeast corner of his quarter section for the Kleskun Lake School.

He later sold out and moved to California.

SOLOMON GRAHAM

Solomon Graham was born in Nova Scotia, in 1857. He married Cornelia Wagner, of Sissiboo Falls, in 1883. They had four sons and four daughters; William, Merle, Tuttle, Nureddon, Lura, Edna, Ella and Flossie.

They lived for some years at Tate, Saskatchewan, then moved in 1911, to the Peace Country, filing on the N.E. 24-72-5-W. 6th. Mrs. Graham and the younger children stayed at Tate until 1913, when Mr. Graham and the older boys had a home ready.

In the early 1930's, they moved to Teepee Creek.

Ella married William Harris. Flossie married Vern Sorenson and is residing in Langley, B.C. They have one adopted son, Don, who is a heavy duty mechanic.

ARTHUR GUNN

Arthur Gunn was born in Nova Scotia in 1871. He came, over the Grouard-Dunvegan Trail, to the Peace River Country, in 1907. He squatted east of Grande Prairie, then moved to the northeast side of Clairmont Lake. When the land was surveyed, he bought his for $5.00 an acre. This was a fraction of about 56 acres, the N.E. 19-72-5-W. 6th. At the same time, he homesteaded the adjoining 136 acres, N.W. 20-72-5-W. 6th. In 1928, when the government sold the school section, he bought the S.E. 29-72-5-W. 6th, for $25.00 an acre. He also bought 'Muskrat' Ward's 98 acre fraction, the S.W. 20-72-5-W. 6th.

In the summer, he worked his farm and in winter, he trapped, going as far as Stoney Lake.

In 1940, he was president of the Old Timers Association.

He sold out to Forrest Falk, in 1945, and retired to Nelson, B.C. From there, he moved to North Surrey, where he died in 1962.

ERNIE HARDIN

Ernie Hardin had a 140 acre fraction on the S.E. corner of Clairmont Lake. He farmed this and also freighted supplies from old Grouard, on the west end of Lesser Slave Lake.

Mr. Hardin was married and had a family of six. They lived in a log cabin about 18' by 24', with a curtain between the kitchen and bedroom.

JACK (JOHN) AND ETHEL HARDIN

Jack Hardin was born in Caryell County, Texas, on November 12, 1875. Mrs. Hardin was born there, in 1881.

Mr. and Mrs. Hardin, with their two oldest children; Nora born in 1900 and Odie born in 1902 left the state of Montana, in 1904, and arrived in Edmon-

ton, in 1906. Two more children, Dora in 1907 and Ila in 1908, were born there.

In the spring of 1909, the family left, via the Grouard Trail, for Peace River. They carried on to Flying Shot, where they wintered on Bear Creek. Their living quarters were a tent and a dugout. They had all their possessions with them; wagons, horses, milk cows, chickens, etc. They stayed there until the land office opened in 1910.

Mr. Hardin, then, filed on S.W. 17-72-5-W. 6th on the southeast corner of Clairmont Lake, where he built a stopping place.

They hauled drinking water from a spring, across the road from the Kleskun Lake school, where the four Hardin children attended school. Mr. John Oatway moved one of his fences over to allow a right-of-way for the Hardin family, so that they would not have to ride or walk around his property to get water or attend school.

In 1912, Mr. Hardin, with his two children; Nora, aged 12, and Odie, aged 10, went to Edmonton with three sleigh loads of grain. The weather was bitterly cold, so the two children tied their teams on behind one another, and rode under a warm sleeping robe, on their father's sleigh. When they reached Edmonton, Mr. Hardin bought a horsepowered threshing machine. They dismantled it, loaded it on the three sleighs and started for home across the ice on Lesser Slave Lake. They had been advised not to take that short-cut, because of the Chinook winds. They could barely see the tracks of the sleighs that had preceded them on the Lake and when they reached the shore, they found that the ice had receded from the bank. Mr. Hardin



Ethel and John Hardin — 1917.



Jack Hardins horse-driven threshing machine. Jack driving horses, son, Odie feeding. Others unknown.

whipped his four-up into the shallow water and made the shore, as did Nora with her father's help. Mr. Hardin then, hooked his team on with Odie's, as he had the separator, which was the heaviest load. This way, they all made it safely and continued on home.

In the summers, the Hardin family looked forward to the fishing and camping trips, sports, berry picking, neighbor and family get-togethers, etc. Neighbors were always ready and willing to help each other in those days.

There were three more children, Orval born in 1913, Ada in 1915, and Desel in 1917, born at Clairmont and delivered by Dr. Higbee. Here, also they lost two year old, Orval, after he was badly burned. This tragedy was recorded in the early day newspaper. He was buried in the Grande Prairie Cemetery, with the Presbyterian Minister, Rev. Forbes, conducting the funeral.



L. to R.: Nora, Mrs. Ethel, Dora, Odie and Ila Hardin at Lake Saskatoon sports — 1912.

In 1918, they sold their homestead and moved to Dawson Creek, B.C., where Mr. Hardin, with his brothers, Lon, Ed, Will and Joe, went into the cattle business. William was born at Pouce Coupe, in 1919.

In 1921, they again, sold out and moved back to the United States. One more child was born in Oregon.

Odie now lives in Oregon. Ada, Desel and Ila and their youngest sister, live in California. The rest of the family are now deceased. Mr. Hardin died in 1957, Mrs. Hardin in 1960. Nora died in 1975, Dora in 1927, and William in 1966.

HARRIS, MR. AND MRS. JOHN H. & FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. John H. Harris and family, came to the Peace River country in 1911, from Strome, Alberta, and settled on land in the Kleskun Lake District. They came over the long trail from Edmonton. Their sons, Jeston and Bill, farmed with their father, Charlie. Irene and Warren attended the Kleskun Lake School. Daughter, Mable, only stayed here a short time, then returned to Strome to get married.

The Harris' had one of the first steam threshing outfits in the country, and did quite a lot of threshing around the neighbourhood. Both Mr. and Mrs. Harris were very active in community affairs.

The Harris family have all passed away except daughter, Mable. She lives in Arizona.

MR. AND MRS. W. JAMES KELLETT AND FAMILY

William James Kellett was born in England. Mrs. Kellett was born in 1860, in Van Kleek Hill, Ontario. They were married, and lived for a time, at Roblin, Manitoba. They moved to Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, where Jim became a sheep rancher and later, a storekeeper, at Tait. In 1910, they had the misfortune of losing their store by fire.

In the summer of 1911, Jim filed on a homestead 26-72-16-W. 6th, in the Peace River Country, east of Clairmont. The following year, he moved his wife and six children, by sleigh from Edmonton, via Athabasca Landing, Lesser Slave Lake and Grouard, to their farm. They arrived on March 12th, 1912, about a month after leaving Edmonton.

Hilda Blanche Kellett had been trained as a school teacher, before her marriage, and had her certificate re-instated for Alberta. She was the first teacher in the Kleskun Lake school, which opened about 1913 or 1914.

The Kelletts had three daughters; Sarah Marion, Florence Hilda, and Bertha Maude, and three sons; James Edward, George Harold and William John.

Mr. Kellett was killed overseas, in 1917. The family moved to Winnipeg in 1918. Three members of the family are still living; Sarah Marion Johannesson of Winnipeg, Florence Hilda Kellett of Winnipeg, and James Edward Kellett of Edmonton, Alberta.

Ed Kellett married Gladys Mitchell, in Roblin, Manitoba in 1941. They have three children; Judith Marnie Traub of Wetaskiwin, Albert, Beverley Anne Dolomont of Dartmouth, N.S., and James Mitchell who is attending Simon Fraser University in B.C. Bev is a physiotherapist and Marnie is a stenographer in a law office. She has four children. Ed is retired in Edmonton.

Mrs. Kellett passed away in November of 1957, at the age of 87 years.

KELLETT, SARAH JOHANNESSON

My parents, Mr. and Mrs. James Kellett, were living in Tate, Saskatchewan, where my Father had a General store, with our living quarters above the store.

It was just prior to Christmas, 1910 and we had all returned from a Christmas Concert and before long had all retired. During the night, smoke was discovered coming from the pipes in my young brother's room from a fire which had started in the basement. Fortunately, we all escaped in our night attire, but the store was completely demolished. My Mother's parents lived in Winnipeg, and through the kindness of the residents of the town, enough clothes were provided, so we arrived in Winnipeg on Christmas Eve — Mother and six children. Thanks to our grandparents, uncles and aunts, even at that late date, we had quite a happy awakening on Christmas morning.

Father did not want to rebuild. He became interested in the Grande Prairie Division when the

Government was offering South African Scrip for a nominal sum, provided the buyer lived on the property for three years to obtain title to the land.

During the summer of 1911 he made a trip there and bought a section. While there, he contacted a number of men with families and persuaded them to settle in the same district, so that a school could be built the next year. Of course the best time for travelling for those families wishing to move there with their belongings was in the winter, in a covered caboose drawn by horses.

In February, 1912, we travlled to Edmonton and while our Father made arrangements for the journey, we stayed with our Mother's Aunt who lived in Ponoka. It was necessary to take in a year's supply of groceries, etc., so he was kept busy for a few days.

We left from Edmonton, February 12, 1912. We stopped at stopping places at night, though we ate and slept in the caboose, as we had a cook stove and bunks in the caboose. The winter route was much shorter.

Riding in the confines of the caboose bothered my Mother and me, so we did a lot of walking behind the caboose, but when we came to a steep incline approaching a river, we all had to get out and walk. My Father had to whip the horses to keep them running fast enough so the sleigh didn't catch up with them and possibly cause an accident on the steep slope. After crossing the river it was hard work for the horses on the opposite incline and we had some logs with us to put under the runners to give the horses a rest and we pushed as hard as we could to help them.

We arrived at our destination, March 12, 1912. During my Father's visit in 1911, he had built a small log shack with the help of others in the same district, so we would have a place to live while larger quarters could be built. However, to my Father's consternation, someone had used it for a stable. There was a high knoll on the property which our Father had chosen for our future home. By good luck, the snow had melted and we pitched a tent there. On awakening, we found that we were covered with the measles, caught no doubt by playing with children along the way. However, we survived that, though it was a lot of worry for our Mother. With the help of neighbors two other shacks were built, one on each side of the boundary dividing the two half sections. Our parents slept in one and we children in the other for six months, in order to obtain title to the land. After that period was over a much larger two-storey house was built on the knoll.

My Mother had been a school teacher before her marriage. As there were several families with children needing schooling, along with ourselves, she became the first teacher of Kleskun Lake School District. She taught about 2½ years and was followed by Mrs. Matheson.

Our water came from a spring just a mile from us. It was hauled on a stoneboat two barrels at a time. During the first summer, the spring had been polluted by cattle getting into it. Then we had to use the water from a slough on our land. This water had to be boiled to be fit for drinking. As soon as the spring was cleaned up, we resumed using the spring water, which was easily accessible and always cold and good tasting.

We grew wheat, oats, barley and garden produce and of course raised hens and pigs which gave some of us chores to do.

The main means of transportation was by wagon, buggy, democrat and horseback riding. Houses were lit by kerosene lamps and heated mostly by wood stoves.

During the winter most of the entertainment took place, box socials, dances, concerts, etc. Always on July 1st, there was a sports day for young and old and a fair in the fall, which attracted crowds from miles around.

War broke out in 1914 and our Dad enlisted in 1916. He went to Edmonton to train with the Royal Canadian Engineers. He was sent to England for further training. On his last leave, before being sent overseas, he went to visit relatives in Yorkshire. Due to the blackout, upon returning to his barracks, he was struck by a train at a railway crossing and killed instantly.

In 1918 my Mother's sister, who lived in Winnipeg, wrote and asked her to come as their parents had died, and take over the family home. Mother had rented a half section and we were living in the town of Grande Prairie. She sold the other half section and we arrived in Winnipeg in October, 1918. I went to work and my brothers and sisters continued their education. Later the remainder of the land was sold.

Wm. James Kellett — Born December 28, 1865. Died August , 1917. Hilda Blanche Cheney — Born October 30, 1874. Died November 15, 1958. Married — December, 1899.

Sarah Marion — Born October 28, 1900. — J. Johannesson — Married August 20, 1927.

Florence Hilda — Born January 16, 1902.

Bertha M. — Born December 15, 1903. Died March 12, 1976.

James Edward — Born December 15, 1903. Gladys Mitchell.

George Harold — Born September, 1905. Florence Hall. Married May, 1925. Died 1944.

Wm. John — Born December 13, 1907. Died November 15, 1969. Connie Gilbert — Married January 3, 1927.

JACK KERR

Jack Kerr is thought to be from the Isle of Man. He was a bachelor who had a farm a mile north of Forrest Falks. He was a good worker.

He is, believed to be, no longer living.

ALLAN AND NELDA LANGDON

Allan Langdon is the second son of Ella Demaine and the late Tom Langdon. When he started school at Kleskun Lake in 1939, he and his older brother, Stewart, rode the two and a half miles on a Indian pony named Bob. Bob was stabled in the school barn with the other horses. Beginning with Allan that year were: Loreen Edwards, Jim Oatway and Dick Robinson.

Winter travel was difficult. Many times the boys would walk on the drifts, as Bob floundered belly-deep in the snow. It was noon by the time the school

warmed up. The ink was frozen as was the drinking water.

Many happy noon hours and recesses were spent on Turner's Hill, skiing and coasting or skating on the slough across the road.

At the yearly Christmas concert, Bob Cochrane Sr. was always Master of Ceremonies and Tommy Robinson was Santa Clause.

The 1912 school building was sold in the early 1950's and is still being used as a garage in a nearby farmyard.

Nelda Nordquist grew up in the town of Millet, Alberta. After high school, she entered the University School of Nursing. Graduating in 1954, she worked at the University a year as a R.N. Nelda and a classmate went to Anchorage, Alaska where they worked for two years at the Native Hospital. After 14 months working in Northern California, Nelda decided to return to Canada.

In January, 1959, she arrived at Grande Prairie to work at the hospital shortly after the new wing was opened. Later that same year she met Allan Langdon.

Allan Langdon and Nelda Nordquist were married at Millet, Alberta, June 18, 1960. They have resided on N.W.¼ 35-72-5-6 since then.

In May, 1961, Rae Anne arrived marking the third generation of Langdons in the district. Ian followed three years later to complete the family. Both children attended Sexsmith Public School.

LANGDON — DEMAINE

Eastern Canada was the source of many homesteaders in the early Peace River Country. One of these was a young native of Mount Forest, Ontario, Tom Langdon, who found his way to the Kleskun Lake district in 1911. While working as a butcher in Lindsay, Ontario in 1910, Tom Langdon and his friend Cecil Waller decided to join a harvest excursion and see the West. Arriving at Laird, Saskatchewan they found jobs on a threshing crew. These "green" Easterners had never experienced anything like a prairie threshing, but they stuck it out. In doing so they became enchanted with the West and the farming life. It was during this fall work, that they heard of new land available for homesteads in the Peace River Country. So wonderful were the reports of rich land being given away for the ten dollar filing fee, that they decided to stay in the West and take advantage of this opportunity. During the winter of 1910-11 they worked in Saskatchewan to raise the grubstake necessary for a year in the Peace River Country.

The early spring of 1911 saw Langdon and Waller on the Edson Trail, bound for the Grande Prairie. While walking the trail the twosome encountered numerous hardships in muskeg, creeks and river fordings. As was the custom of the time, pioneer helped pioneer. Fellow travellers on the trail with Tom Langdon were the Harris and Cochrane families, who also located in the Kleskun district, and became lifelong neighbors and friends of the Langdons.

On arrival on the Grande Prairie, Tom Langdon filed on N.E.¼ 4-35-72-5-6, and Waller filed on N.W.¼ 35-72-5-6. "Proving up" was a very difficult task and so Tom Langdon formed a partnership with two other settlers in the district. They were Leonard Fishburne, an ex-university professor from Birmingham, Alabama; and Alexander (Scotty) Margach. Through the purchase of South African Scrip, Scotty Margach had acquired a half section in addition to his homestead quarter. Thus the partnership began with five quarters of land; a sizeable portion for the farming methods of the day.

The men all lived in Scotty's sod roofed shack and set about "proving up". Supplies ran short the first summer as none of the partners possessed any idea how much was required. This was a serious situation with the nearest supply depot being Edson. Limited supplies were available in Grande Prairie or at Lake Saskatoon, where the men journeyed from time to time to pick up their mail. Despite the shortages, they managed to last until "freeze up" allowed them to use the Edson Trail to freight in more supplies.

Slowly, in the years following 1911, the land was cleared, broken and throughout the district houses replaced log cabins. Then in 1914 with war declared in Europe, Scotty Margach felt the call of duty. Ever a true Scot, and homesick for his native land, he seized this opportunity to cross the ocean. He spent four years serving in France, seeing little of his homeland. Following the War he returned to Winnipeg, so badly wounded and crippled that further homesteading was out of the question.

During the War, Tom Langdon had gone to Winnipeg where he resumed his old trade as a butcher. The other partner, Fishburne, returned to his teaching post in Alabama, and that was the end of his homesteading days. However, Tom Langdon was determined to return to his homestead and in 1920 he arrived in the Kleskun Lake district and resumed farming on a large scale. He worked all the land in the original partnership plus other rented land.

As the 1920's progressed the Peace River Country became a great deal easier place in which to live. Roads improved and the automobile became a common means of transportation during dry periods in the summer months only.

It was in 1926 that a young "Scottish Lassie", Ella Robertson, sailed from Scotland to Canada to visit her brothers, Harry and Walter in Windsor, Ontario. While at sea, she met and became friends with Mrs. Donald McPherson, whose husband owned land west of the Tom Langdon homestead. Also on the boat were other settlers from the Kleskun Lake district, Mr. and Mrs. George Hamilton and Mr. Anthony Gowan and Mrs. George Bass.

Ella and Mrs. McPherson exchanged correspondence after their arrival in Canada, and after two years in the Windsor area, Ella accepted an invitation to visit the McPhersons on their farm.

Ella Robertson arrived in Clairmont, March 10, 1928. The arrival was a major event in the eyes of the young Scotch girl. She was surprised to be met at the station (consisting of two boxcars pushed together on a siding) by, not only the McPhersons, but what seemed to be the entire population of the town. It was the custom of those early days for everyone to meet the twice weekly trains from the "outside".

The same evening most of the entire community attended a dance in the Clairmont Hall. It was there that Ella Robertson met Tom Langdon, neighbour of the McPhersons, for the first time. It was not to be their last meeting.

Ella returned East in May, wearing a diamond ring, and having promised Tom that she would meet him in Winnipeg in the fall. On October 27, 1928 Tom and Ella were married at the home of his former homestead partner, Scotty Margach.

A new home awaited the newlyweds when they returned to the Kleskun district. It was located on the land directly west of Tom's original homestead and purchased by him from Cecil Waller. Excitement was great with neighbors to meet, school picnics at Kleskun Lake, and dances at the community hall. In addition, there was much to learn of this new life as the wife of a farmer. These were happy days and Ella enjoyed the people and the community life. She joined many organizations and derived a great deal of pleasure from riding horseback throughout the community. This being the only means of independent travel in wet and winter weather.

Ella and Tom's oldest son, Stewart, was born in 1930 at the Grande Prairie Hospital. Allan, the second son, was born in Mount Forest, Ontario during a winter spent there in 1933.

It was during the difficult depression years that Tom Langdon became seriously ill. During his hospitalization Ella's brother, Walter Robertson, assisted in the farm work. After a lengthy illness, Tom Langdon passed away in 1935.

Ella and the boys stayed on the farm, and with Walter's help, managed to carry on. She found the challenge difficult to bear at times, but many good friends and helpful neighbors made life easier than it might have been.

During these years the Langdon boys started school at Kleskun Lake which had been built in 1912 with the assistance of their father. Stewart started in 1936, and Allan in 1939. The boys' first teachers were Martha Gudlaugson, now Mrs. J. Callister of Port Alberni, B.C. and Miss Nellie Lewis of the Dimsdale district.

In the same year as Tom's death a young man by the name of Jack Demaine who Tom had met in the hospital and who had been sent there by J. B. Oliver came to the district. J. Demaine was born in Saint John, New Brunswick, and at a very early age found his way West. Boarding a harvest excursion in Moncton, he landed at Drinkwater, Saskatchewan where he stayed until 1927 when he decided to come to the Peace River Country. He settled in the Valleyview district and stayed there four years. He then moved to the Grande Prairie area. In 1932 he managed the farming operation of the late Hugh Ferguson until he sold his land and went back to Bellingham, Washington.

Jack moved to the Clairmont district and took over the management of the Langdon farm until May, 1940. After seeding the crop that year, duty called, he and Ella's brother, Walter, joined the Army. Jack was based in Calgary for the next 10 months.

In July of that year a severe hail storm passed through the district, but one of the few crops left untouched was that on the Langdon farm. Help had been very scarce with all of the young men off fighting for their country, but the storm changed that. Help became plentiful from those whose crops were destroyed. Under the capable hands of Mr. Syd Drysdale on the binder, and Mr. Tom Corlett's and Forest Falk's threshing crews the bumper crop came off on schedule.

A trip to Calgary, accomplished by Stewart, Allan and Mrs. Syd Drysdale, was made by car to see her son, Gordon, who was in the Army.

During that time a romance blossomed and Ella Langdon and Jack Demaine were married the following December (1940) while Jack was on leave. The weather was 60 degrees below zero Fahrenheit and held that temperature for 16 days, then a warm Chinook came through the country and water flowed everywhere. The weather had kept people near home but the mild spell brought them all out to the home of the newlyweds for an old-fashioned shivaree. The entire Army detachment, which was based at Grande Prairie came and the district was well represented. Looking back, it was a happy event and well remembered by many.

Jack returned to Calgary and was posted to the Coastal Artillery in Halifax, N.S. During this time he contracted pneumonia and was invalided from the service in November, 1941.

In 1942, a son, Michael, was born to the Demaines. Because a measles epidemic had quarantined the Grande Prairie Hospital, the birth took place at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. B. (Bill) Godfrey of the Kleskun Hill district. Mrs. Godfrey, a well known district nurse, aided Dr. A. M. Carlisle, with the delivery.

Michael's first school was also Kleskun Lake, then in its final year of operation 1949-50. Two teachers served the dozen students that year; Mrs. Shirley Chugg, from September to Christmas, and Miss Belle Wallace, January to June.

Miss Wallace was a semi-retired lady of great experience who came forth to do her bit in times of teacher shortage. A lady of great independence, she thought nothing of the difficulties of living alone in the small teacherage through the bitter winter weather. On occasion she walked several miles to and from the farms of the district where she was invited for a Sunday dinner.

Kleskun Lake School closed in the spring of 1950. Allan and Michael then moved to Grande Prairie, where they stayed with Stewart, who worked there for two years before joining the R.C.M.P. in 1951. The younger boys attended school during the week and returned to the farm on the weekends. This went on until 1955 when the County system introduced buses into the district, in time for Michael to complete his schooling in Sexsmith and Grande Prairie.

Jack Demaine was stricken by a lengthy illness in 1954, and Allan, at this time employed by an oil company, returned to take over the farming operations. After extensive hospitalization, Jack Demaine passed away in April, 1956.

The boys of this family are now all married and settled with families of their own. Stewart, of Prince George, B.C. married Faye Miller of Duncan, B.C. They have three children; Allan, Loree, and Cathy.

Michael now of Sherwood Park, Alberta married Joan Wales. They have two children, Calvin and Darren.

Allan Langdon, married to Nelda Nordquist of Millet, Alberta, continues to reside on the home place in the Kleskun Lake district, and to operate the farm which encompasses the homestead his father filed on in 1911. They have two children, Rae Anne and Ian. Ella Demaine moved to her present home in Grande Prairie in 1962.

Over the years much of the land in the district has passed from the families of the original settlers to newcomers. The Langdon family remains as one of the few in the area with direct links to the original pioneers of the Kleskun Lake District.

"SCOTTY" MARGACH

"Scotty" Margach had a scrip south of the Kellett section.

MRS. FRANK MATHESON

Mrs. Matheson was one of the first three teachers at the Kleskun Lake School No. 2743.

The Mathesons moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba after a few years residence in the Grande Prairie district.

Mrs. Matheson and Mrs. Kellett were about the same age and were very good friends. This friendship continued in Manitoba as the Kellett family went back there to live. Jim Kellett was killed in World War I. Mrs. Matheson died in Winnipeg sometime before 1940 leaving a son Allen who lives in Regina, Saskatchewan.

This information was given by one of her pupils James Edward Kellett, who lives in Edmonton.

HARLEY McINTYRE

Harley McIntrye was a veteran of the south African Boer War. He was a bachelor who had a half section scrip and a homestead. He was very interested in baseball and community work.

He joined up in the Second World War and was killed in action.

DOUGLAS MOOREHOUSE

Douglas Moorehouse's homestead was east of Fishburns' and north across the road from Frank Turners. He was a relative of Solomon Grahams.

Douglas married Mary Twombly, the second daughter of the Twombly family.

He sold his homestead to Frank Turner and, it is believe, moved to B.C.

AXEL AND ANNE MORKEN AND FAMILY

Axel Morken was born in Norway, and, when he was four years old, emigrated, with his parents, to Pekin, North Dakota, in 1886. He spent his youth in Pekin, leaving for Technical school in Fargo, North Dakota, to further his education and acquire a Steam Engineer's papers. From there, he moved to Debuc, Saskatchewan, where he engaged in a farming operation with a 'Skagen'. They purchased and operated the 'Skagen & Morken', steam threshing outfit.

When World War I broke out, Axel enlisted at Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, and went overseas with the Fifth Battalion, where he served for over five years, and was wounded in action. In February of 1919, Axel married Anne Leslie, in Scotland and later that year, they emigrated to Clairmont. Axel, throughout the war, had kept in touch with his sister, Jennie (Mrs. Tom Sheehan), who had come into the country over the Edson Trail, in 1910. She had given him glowing reports of the country, so he decided to give it a try. The Morkens arrived in Clairmont, where they rented a house. They chose land on which they decided to settle; east of Clairmont Lake, the N.W. 16-72-5-W. 6th, which he purchased from Ernie Beard, through the Soldier Settlement Board. It was a long cold winter in 1919, and Axel recalled having hauled the last of their belongings over Clairmont Lake on May 2, 1920.

They had three children; two sons, Jim and George, and one daughter, Dorothy. Unfortunately, their mother passed away in March of 1931. But her parents, James and Jean Leslie, arrived to help care for the children. They made their home with Axel for the next few years. (James Leslie passed away at Grande Prairie in 1935. Jean Leslie left later that year, to return to Scotland, where she passed away after the war.)

The children all attended Kleskun Lake school. Their father took a deep interest in the school, and served for many years, in various posts on the school board. They recall the long, hard, cold winters with the long 2½ mile trek to school over drifted roads, in a horse-drawn cutter; the freezing feet and faces, then doing their homework and reading with a coal oil lamp. Social activities, other than visiting neighbors occasionally, were non-existent, but the highlight of the year was the annual Christmas concert.

Their father spent long, cold days, hauling home logs from the bush many miles away, to be sawed and then split into firewood.

As we were blessed with the most wonderful neighbors, the Oatways, the family was able to haul drinking water from their well, for many years.

When wheat dropped to a low of 19c per bushel, times were hard and 10 percent interest on back payments to the Soldier Settlement Board, were hard to come by.

Later, Jim enlisted and went overseas in the Second World War, while George helped man the farm. Dorothy helped out at home and later accepted a job in Grande Prairie.

Axel passed away in Grande Prairie, in April of 1961.

All the family are now farming. Jim is on the former Forest Falk farm, purchased through the V.L.A. George is on the original home farm. Dorothy (Mrs. Dave Thomson) lives on a farm west of Clairmont.

Jim is married to the former Melina Barr, from Goodfare. They have one son, Kevin. George is married to Cecelia Chrenek, formerly of Sexsmith. They have two sons; Gary, of Grande Prairie, and Alan, of Clairmont, and two daughters; Valerie (Mrs. M. Nemeth) of Lethbridge; and Janice. Dorothy and Dave Thomson have four sons; Neil, Ken, Gerald and James, and one daughter, Ruthann, all of Clairmont.

JOHN AND ANNA OATWAY

Jack, as he was called, was born at Perth, Ontario, February 3, 1879 and in 1899 went to Dominion City,

Manitoba on a harvest excursion. Impressed by the west he worked in the woods and mines at Golden and Revelstoke, B.C., and on the railroad tunnel at Field before feeling financially secure enough to head for the Peace River Country to homestead.

In 1910 with a team of cayuses and a buckboard, Jack headed for the north. In just eighteen days he arrived at what is now Grande Prairie. He knew Arthur Gunn and Ike Southward; friends from B.C. and Lacombe respectively, who had come into the area earlier and he looked for them. They weren't hard to find because there were few settlers and everyone knew everyone. There was homestead land available near his friends so he filed on August 16, 1910 on the N.E. 17-72-5-W. 6, and soon had a log shack with a sod roof built on his quarter.

That winter Jack and Arthur Gunn went back to Edmonton and returned in the spring of 1911 with oxen, machinery and grub stakes, prepared to go farming. That same spring the Apheus Patterson family arrived with a beautiful daughter; Anna and Jack began courting. This couple had been born and raised twelve miles apart in Ontario but travelled all the way to the Peace River Country before meeting.

With the arrival of families, the need for a school was evident and Oatway, Gunn and Southward, although they were bachelors, backed a petition for a school. In 1912, Kleskun Lake School District No. 2743 was formed and a school built on S.W. 27-72-5-W. 6 at a cost of $325.00. Jack was influential in swaying the government to place the school in the centre of the district. The school became the hub of the community and since he was a fiddler and step dancer, Jack found himself entertaining at dances.

In 1911 a South African scrip adjoining his land was for sale so he purchased the S.½ 17-72-5-W. 6 for $600.00. This land is now adjacent to Highway 34 just seven miles from the city of Grande Prairie and is still owned by the Oatway family.

On April 22, 1914, Anna Patterson's 23rd birthday, she married Jack Oatway and moved to the homestead in the Kleskun Lake district; romantically naming it "Maple Hurst Farm". Being surrounded by bachelors, Anna took the brunt of their practical jokes. These ranged from finding Joe Pringle perched, like a stork, on top of the stove pipe, when the smoke drove her out of the shack; to enquiries about tools and equipment with fictitious names with which she was unfamiliar.

The Oatways were community minded and actively took part in the fairs with Jack being director of the Grande Prairie Agricultural Society. He was also a councillor for the Municipality of Grande Prairie No. 709 and a school board member, serving as chairman for years.

School became a very important part of the Oatway life style because ten children were born of that union. In 1928, ten pupils attended the Kleskun Lake School, five of those were Oatways. In the 1930-31 term, seven Oatway children attended that school. In 1929 one-third of the enrollment of eighteen were Oatways and Jack chaired the board. The family was an entire ball team in itself.

Anna and Jack were involved in U.F.W.A. and U.F.A. and active members of the United Church



Anna and Jack Oatway — 1928.

which had Sunday sermons in the school. Jack was a director of the local telephone company and one of the first in the district to install the phone. Their love for their chosen community never allowed them to stray very far away from it. Jack made a couple of trips to Ontario because of family illness and Anna travelled to Victoria for her parents golden wedding anniversary, but otherwise their trips never took them beyond Edmonton.

The community and the school, the children and the family farm kept Anna and Jack very close to the Kleskun Lake district. Memorable moments still shared by the family were the cutter and buggy rides to and from school with the occasional runaway with either outfit. On cold winter days after a freshly fallen overnight snow the Oatway kids used to count "tobacco spits" on the snow — for earlier that morning their dad and Elmer Kline had gone to the bush for loads of firewood. These two pioneers each enjoyed chewing tobacco. Since Jack drove his team from the right and Elmer from the left, it was easy to count which man had spit where and how many spits between home and school.

Being very consciencious about school attendance; weather never kept Oatways from school. "After a blizzard or after —50 degree Fahrenheit, Dad drove us to school so there would be no absenteeism." The teacher's authority was final with the Oatway parents. "The teacher was always right and if you were strapped at school you were 'licked' at home for the

same offense. If a little is good, a lot is better!" Imagine nine kids through nine years of school — that's eight-one kid-unit-years to supervise and re-chastise.

Skating every recess and noon on Turners' slough was great fun! Sometimes skates were never removed all day. Those old school floors were pretty slivered — no wonder they needed gallons of oil to preserve them. Playing Norwegian ball in summer was a noon and recess activity and in order to have a ball game, every student had to participate. "We were all ball players in those days!"

Homemade skies were in order for sliding down Turners' hill in winter. Sometimes the cutter went up the hill too, but the parents were never informed about this activity. In all those years there were not very many accidents or injuries and nothing serious. During their junior years the Oatway family never suffered a broken bone and only one operation — an appendectomy.

The memories of life on the farm in the Kleskun Lake district will always be cherished by the Oatway family; five of whom still live in the Peace River Country. Anna died in 1960 and Jack in 1962. Memories of them are revived at the frequent family reunions held by their offspring.

To quote these second generation Oatways — "It was a pleasure and a privilege and down right good fortune, to have had wonderful parents like ours and to have lived our childhood years in the Kleskun Lake district. It is with this story, we honor our parents — Anna and Jack Oatway."

Children of Anna and Jack Oatway

Gordon Wilson — June 13, 1915. Farmed in the Twilight district with his wife, the former Marjorie Binks. — Two children, Harvey and Muriel.

Irma Lillian — April 23, 1918. Teacher — married to Adolph Torie of Sunnynook, Alberta. Four children — Dale and Jack Harrington, Kay and Keith Torie.

Helen Marguerite — April 18, 1919. Married, with three sons — Melvin, Leslie and Brian Kjosness. A widow, Helen Westergaard now lives at Fort Saint John, B.C.

John Edwin — June 15, 1920. Postal employee, living in Edmonton, married, with four children — Barbara, Gail, Wayne and Calvin.



Six of the Oatway children — 1924.

Donald William — June 1, 1921. Farmer at Evansburg, Alberta. Married to Marjorie Clarke, formerly of Clairmont with five sons — Clifford, Gregory, Rodney, Lionel and Phillip.

Lorne Patterson — August 3, 1922. Farmer at Crooked Creek, Alberta. Married to Dawn Gunby of Debolt with six children — David, Ross, Lila-Mae, Sherry Lynn, Stuart and Terry.

Laura Eleanor — May 18, 1924. Widow of Raymond Harrison formerly of the Twilight district with three children — Murray, Patricia and Colleen; living in Grande Prairie and Spirit River.

Glenna Mary — June 18, 1926. Deceased.

Robert Murray — January 15, 1928. Farming the original Oatway farmstead, married to Alice Monroe of Goodwin, Alberta with four children — Jack, Arlene, Mona and Karen.

James Arthur — June 2, 1932. Fiberglass plant employee in Edmonton. Married to Wilma Weaver with three sons — Richard, Robert and Raymond.

RICHARD McRAE OATWAY

Richard Oatway, better known as Dick to his friends and family, was born in Perth, Ontario, Lanark County, on May 8, 1897. In 1917, he ventured west directly to the Grande Prairie area. Here he homesteaded on S.W. 8-72-5-W. 6 for a few years and then sold out to John Merik.

At this point in 1924, he moved to P.T. 30-72-5-W. 6, where he homesteaded on the shores of Clairmont Lake. During this time he made his second home at his brother's, John Oatway, for ball games, holiday meals and family activities.

By 1928 he was able to buy a quarter of school land to the east of his homestead. He was able to farm this until 1947 when he rented it out to Lorne and Murray, his nephews.

To retire, Dick moved his house down to his brother, John's, yard. After a stroke in 1957, he spent some time in the Pioneer Lodge until his death in 1959.

JOSEPH PACKNOSKI STORY

In 1929, my wife and I came to Canada from Poland; we arrived in Quebec and then travelled to Fork River, to spend the winter with my uncle, Mr. Ruclkiervitz. Later the same year, I received a letter from a friend, saying that Alberta was a fine place to live. I left Fork River, and travelled to Webster, where I filed on a homestead.

Next thing was to find a job. A friend Leonard Ostrashewski and I heard there was work available on the railroad in Hythe. We walked from Webster to Clairmont and tried along with approximately 30 other men, to board the freight cars. The train had stopped at the water tower and without warning, it suddenly pulled out and left us behind. Leonard and I continued to walk on to Hythe. We arrived at the first work site about 7 o'clock that evening and there we slept on a pile of ties.

In the morning Leonard wanted to go for breakfast. Not knowing the language, I was unable to order breakfast, so Leonard ordered a bowl of cornflakes for each of us. We still had a five mile walk to the second job site. When we got there, we found about 50 men working and another 500 men waiting, along the side of

the ditch, for a chance at a job. One look was enough; we started our long walk back to Grande Prairie, both of us were hungry, and without money.

Luckily, as we passed a Grande Prairie shoe shop, we heard someone speaking in Polish. We went in and asked the man for 10c for a loaf of bread; he was a kindly man and gave us 25c. We ate and then continued our walk to Webster.

Back at Webster, I received news that my wife and son were on their way, but their ticket would only take them as far as Edmonton. I had no money to send them, but I heard that someone wanted 10 acres of brush cut and piled and was offering $80.00 for the job. I got the job, and explained to him that my wife was stranded in Edmonton and needed $40.00 right away. He gave me the money. I sent $30.00 to my wife and with the rest I bought myself an axe and food.

When my wife arrived, we built a house on the homestead in Webster. I also had a job cutting bush, for which I got paid a team of horses and a cow. We didn't have the cow for too long; we found her hung up in a deep creek. A neighbour came over with his team of horses and we pulled her out. The next day we found her dead in the barn. Tears rolled down my wife's face, because we needed the milk for our baby son. Eventually we overcame our disappointment, for shortly after we acquired another cow to supply our growing family with milk.

My Webster homestead didn't produce enough to support us, so we moved to a farm north of Sexsmith and rented a quarter section of land. We lived in the one room house, which was on this property. That year I plowed 118 acres of land with one team of horses and a walking plow, and it produced a bumper crop of oats, the following year. The second year I rented more land and seeded oats and wheat. Luck was with us once again, we had a good crop. We stayed here for three years and made enough money to buy one-half section of our own, just east of Clairmont.

In Clairmont, we farmed for seven years. It was here that I bought one of the first combines in the area; a 6 ft. Cockshutt, and harvested 600 acres of land.



Standing: Florence, Eugene, Ted and Ed. Seated: Jo-Ann and Joseph Packnoski with Phyllis.

My children, at the time were going to school at Kleskun Lake and soon were in need of further education. It was then we moved to Grande Prairie, where I bought a lot in town and we built a house, that was to be our home for the next 24 years. I travelled to and from Grande Prairie to the farm and I also worked at the Alberta Wheat Pool. Later still I bought another farm in the Valleyview area, which I am still farming. We built a new home on this place.

My wife and I are the parents of five children;

Eugene married Sophie in 1954 and they have two children, Kathy and James. They lived in Edmonton for 20 years and then moved to Valleyview to farm.

Ed married Agnes in 1952 and they have four children; Wayne, Linda, Diane and Kelly. Ed is an Engineer consultant for oil rigs and farms in the Valleyview area.

Florence married Horner Cassidy in 1956. They have four children; Susan, Brenda, Brian and Maureen and they lived in Edmonton for three years, then moved to Calgary, where they still reside.

Fred married Lena in 1958. They have three children; Cheryl, Larraine and Kevin. Fred works on rigs and farms in the Valleyview area.

Phyllis married Robert Murphy in 1965. They have three children; Brent, Quentin and Craig and live in Grande Prairie.

IKE SOUTHWARD

Ike Southward was a bachelor who had a homestead, S.E. 20-72-7-W. 6th, joining John Oatway's homestead. Mr. Southward was in the British Army and was in India for part of his Army career.

He cooked for the survey gang and was also up in the Yukon during the Gold Rush days. He was a good neighbour.

Ike sold his homestead to Mr. Morken and bought a half section on the north side of Clairmont Lake.

THE SPROULE FAMILY — by Dorothea Sproule Lawrence.

Dr. Albert O. and Mrs. Lillian Sproule, with their children Donald, age 8, Campbell, 5, and Dorothea, 3, arrived in Grande Prairie in the winter of 1911 and settled on a section of land in the Kleskun Lake District.

Dr. and Mrs. Sproule were originally from Parsboro, Nova Scotia and moved to Edmonton in 1904. After practicing Dentistry in Edmonton for about seven years the doctor's pioneer spirit called and he invested in two covered sleighs and took his family over the 500 mile Grouard Trail from Edmonton to Grande Prairie in the cold January of 1911.

The most notable incident on this trip occurred when the wind blew one of the covered cabooses over, while crossing the ice on Lesser Slave Lake, dumping Dr. Sproule and Don in the snow and generally messing up the inside of the caboose along with the rest of the family. No one was injured and Dot is quoted as having said "Wasn't that a dandy dump?"

Why Dr. Sproule chose this particular section is not

The family did not live on the farm all year round, after 1914, but for some years, moved out in the summer time from the village of Grande Prairie where the dentist's office was located. Large fields of wheat and oats were raised, during these years, the land being prepared by Don on a tractor.

In the early days, Dr. Sproule, was asked by the residents of various settlements to come to their area as there were many in need of dental care. As a result, he fixed up a covered wagon as a dental office and travelled to different settlements, being away from home a few weeks at a time.

Mrs. Sproule, who was a musician and had a lovely voice, took a folding organ with her to Grande Prairie and whenever she went to a church or social gathering, the organ was taken along. The main entertainment in the Sproule household was a sing-song after dinner.

The Sproule family moved to Edmonton in 1926 in order to give their children a University education and the Doctor practiced dentistry there for many years. Mrs. Sproule died in 1933 and Dr. Sproule in 1941.

Don went to Kleskun Lake school for a time but finished his schooling in Grande Prairie and went to Normal School in Edmonton for his teacher training. He then taught school in the summer and attended the University of Alberta in the winter. After he secured his Master of Science in Physics, he went to London, England, on a scholarship to continue research in the field of Ultra Sonics. During the Second World War, equipment that Don designed, was used on ships to locate "mines", etc. Don and his wife are still living in London and their three daughters and son live nearby.

Campbell completed Grade 11 in Grande Prairie and then attended the University of Alberta where he secured his M.Sc. in Geology. He was then granted a scholarship and took his Ph.D. at the University of Toronto. Cam finally established his own Geological Consulting firm and became well known and respected internationally, particularly in the field of oil exploration. He died suddenly in May, 1970, while giving a talk on the "Arctic" at a conference in Jasper.

Dorothy completed Grade ten in Grande Prairie and after finishing Grade twelve at Strathcona High School in Edmonton, she attended the University of Alberta where she secured her B.A. degree. In 1930, she was granted a scholarship to attend McGill School of Social Work in Montreal, graduating in 1932.

She married in 1933 and continued working at various times on a short term basis while bringing up her hree daughters. Finally, after her family was grown up, she worked as a Marriage Counsellor for ten years. Dorothy and her husband are at present living in Montreal, Quebec, and their three daughters and their families live close by.

THE TWOMBLYS — by Evelyn (Twombly) McRae

Mr. Calvin Ferdinand Twombly homesteaded about 1902, at Granum, Alberta. After proving up Mr. Twombly, deciding that the Grande Prairie district, of the Peace River country, sounded good to him, sold out and moved north. With his wife, Sarah, and four girls, he rigged up two wagons; one covered, with stove, cupboard, three beds, etc., and started on the long trail known but it could be that from the homesite on a clear day, one could see miles and miles of beautiful parkland, with the Rocky Mountains in the background and it was, without doubt, very fertile land.
north of Lesser Slave Lake, via Peace River and Dunvegan.

They, eventually, landed at Twin Lakes, Clairmont, where they stopped and built a log house and barn with sod roofs and dirt floors, only to find that a man named Spencer had filed, sight unseen, on the place in Edmonton. They lived there until Christmas Day, 1910, when they left again, for Edmonton.

Going down the Smoky River, they went through the ice at the mouth of the Simonette River. The caboose was half below the water, but some men came and helped chop the ice away to get the sleigh out. We camped on the bank, in the tall pines, for the night, where we built a big fire to cook on and to dry our bedding. They were ready to go the next day, and had lovely warm weather until they reached Slave Lake. There it was 70 degrees below zero, Fahrenheit, on the lake. However, they made it to Swan Lake, where they stopped for a few days until the weather settled down. They, then, continued on to Edmonton.

In 1912, they returned to the Grande Prairie district to settle east of ClairmontLake, Mr. Twombly having filed and made sure of his land this time.

Our neighbors, on the homestead were; the Frank Turners, the Beards, the Falks, the Fishburns, the Kelletts, and Ed Ward (a bachelor.) They were all good neighbors, always ready to give a helping hand.

We girls, Evelyn (myself), Mary and Alberta, went to Kleskun school, for a while. This was near Frank Turner's farm.

Roy (Calvin Roy) was born at Clairmont in 1910, and Cecil, in 1913.

In 1914, Evelyn married Ritchie McRae and still live on Ritchie's original homestead. Mary married Douglas Morehouse. She passed away on March 4, 1965. He lives at Viking, Alberta. Alberta married Byron Goodvin. She is also deceased. He lives at Prince George, B.C. Jennie married Joe Goodvin. He passed away in 1974. She lives at Summerland, B.C. Roy lives at Pouce Coupe, B.C. and Cecil at Prince George.

Mr. Twombly died at Mara, B.C. in March of 1938. Mrs. Twombly at Kelowna, in March of 1954.

ED WARD

Ed Ward was a bachelor who had a scrip of a half section, W.½ 27-72-5-W. 6th, and a homestead quarter, N.E. 27-72-5-W. 6th.

One day when John Oatway was passing a field where Ed had been cutting a crop of oats, he noticed the binder and horses over by the bush. He discovered Ed caught under the binder, where he had apparently fallen and been dragged. He had to get help to get Ed out from under the binder and to the hospital. As they took him in, Ed remarked that it was the first time, in his life, that he had been in a hospital. He passed away later.

Photos of Interest



Percy Newton with his threshing machine and crew.



Stewart Allan and Pony 'Bob'.



Percy Newton at his farm.



Joe LaCrosse and Allan Langdon (Trapper) and dog team.



Threshing 1940 — Falks.

Miscellaneous Anecdotes

MEMORIES OF PIONEER DAYS — by Edna Agar Sturdy

Felt sorry my visit in London was over but what an eventful day I enjoyed. The plane flew over Scotland and the Northern tip of Iceland. Then over the middle of Greenland and over Baffin Islands, then over the N.W.T. over Alberta and the Cariboo country.

Many memories came to mind when we flew over the Peace River country. Before I was married I taught school at Kleskun Lake. I took the train from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan to Edson, Alberta and my brother-in-law Bob Cochrane met me in Edson. He had come for me from Grande Prairie via the Edson Trail with a sleigh and team of oxen. He had put a canvas shelter on the back of the sleigh where I slept. He had a helper who came also with sleigh and oxen to carry feed for oxen and also bring supplies back from Edson. The men slept on the ground on a bed made from evergreen branches. They kept a bon fire lit for warmth and of course had plenty of blankets.

During the trip I suffered from a severe headache and when one of Bob's oxen had a hoof pulled off and had to be led home, resulting in slower travel time, Mr. John Patterson — the postmaster in Grande Prairie, who had come along the Trail kindly offered to take me along, to get me to Grande Prairie faster as he had a sleigh with horses. It was a blessing Mr. Patterson took me, when Bob's oxen had the accident because when I arrived at the Cochrane home, I was very ill with typhoid fever. I was delirious. Funny, I still remember thinking Jake Weber was the Governor General of Canada. I had met Jake briefly, when he went to get Bob's other sleigh back to the farm. Dr. Higbee, a district health nurse Miss Agnes Baird and my sister Jennie nursed me back to health. Jennie cared for me so well I really owe my life to her.

After my recovery I enjoyed a wonderful time. Everyone rode horseback. Dan Wishart loaned me a little pony. I named her Dolly. My two best friends were Rita Carveth Purser and Mamie Moore Douglas. There were no motor cars in the country. I saw the first one that managed to get over the Edson Trail in August 1913. What a novelty it was. I attended the laying of the corner stone ceremony of the new Presbyterian Hospital in July 1913.

At the end of that year I went back to Saskatoon via stage coach to Edson in company with Dr. Annie Higbee and son Jack and Mr. Shuttleworth. I wanted to attend college to acquire a permanent teachers certificate. Upon completion of the course, I applied for Kleskun Lake School and was accepted by the board so I returned to Grande Prairie on the first train March 1916, accompanied by my brother Irwin Agar.

I stayed with the Cochranes and began teaching shortly upon my arrival, at Kleskun Lake School. Some of my pupils came from the Kellett, Graham, Harris and Turner families living in that district. I rode horseback to school. Bob gave me a young horse to ride and one day he saw a couple of other horses and took off at high speed to join them, the saddle turned and I found myself with no control over the horse but somehow I managed to get off and remount and off I went.

All rural school teachers taught all grades in one room schools, we were taught how to manage this when we took our teacher training. In those days teachers were in short supply and a high school student could teach a summer school without training. Schools were closed for winter holidays. The examination papers for entrance to High School were marked in Edmonton and the teacher had to send the papers to Edmonton to be marked. I remember feeling so proud when the marks were returned to me and all my pupils passed.



Kleskun Lake School cleanup — 1929.

We put on a Christmas concert. Mrs. Turner played the organ and Bob Cochrane was chairman. We had a tree and presents for the pupils. The pupils made the ornaments for the tree from colored paper. We had refreshments afterwards. With the money from sale of tickets for the Concert, a lovely desk was bought for the teacher's use. I remember warning the pupils not to put a finger on it! Bob Cochrane had made all the desks for the school. There were some books in the school. Slates were used in all grades.

I remember when Jimmy Cochrane was born, I had to take Jean and Ruth to Mrs. Shortreeds, and look after them when I got back from school.

All these memories came to my mind when I looked down from the airplane over the same ground and recalled the pioneer days of so long ago.

We had two children a son Ferris who lives in Victoria and a daughter Dorothy Hill who lives presently in London, England.

Jack and I retired in Victoria where we had a few happy years together before he died following a lengthy illness in 1966. I enjoy my six grandchildren Maureen, Janice and John Sturdy; Tom, Jim, and Brenda Hill.



Beginner class — 1939-40. Allan Langdan, Jim Robinson, Dick Robinson, Ed and Gene Packnoski.

Lindsay



Family Histories

OSCAR AND LEDIVINE ALBINATI

Oscar Albinati was born in Charmey, province of Canton of Fribourg, Switzerland. In 1918, he emigrated to Montreal, Canada. Oscar came west to the Peace River country and homesteaded near Falher, Alberta, for a short while.

Ledivine Diederich was born on May 21, 1897, in Ellange Luxembourg, Europe, where she attended school until the age of 12 years. She received her high school education at a girl's school in Mettet, Belgium. While Miss Diederich was finishing grade 12, her older sister became very ill, and Ledivine was called home. Later she became governess to an Engineer's family, who were transferred to oil fields in Southern Russia. She and the Rauss family spent five years in the Caucus at Grozne. This was during the Russian Revolution of 1914-19. When the Bolshevicks came, Mr. Rauss, who was in danger of being killed, fled, with his family, in the night to the Caspian Sea. Here, the young governess and the Rauss family met the English and Turkish allies and remained under their protection for the next six months. When they returned, safely, to Luxembourg, Miss Diederich moved on to Paris, France. There, she found employment, while she waited for her passport to Canada.

In 1920, she landed at Montreal; then came west, by train, to join her brothers, Mike, John and Joe Diederich, in the Grande Prairie area.

On the train in from Edmonton, she met Oscar Albinati, who was returning to his farm at Falher.

Three years later, on April 9, 1923, they were married in Vancouver. They lived and worked at the coast for a year, then returned to the Peace River country.

Mr. and Mrs. Albinati came to Glen Leslie in 1924. Oscar rented the Whalen place and, during the spring, plowed the whole farm, with horses and a walking plow. The couple moved to the Struhan land, to farm, for the next three years. Their first child, Germaine, was born here.

Mr. Albinati bought the original Bezanson house and icehouse at the Bezanson townsite. The house was dismantled, for it was too large and heavy to bring up the hill. The icehouse was hauled up by four teams of horses. It was used for the Albinati's home on the N.W. 13-72-3 W6th. This land was the Gilbert Nelson homestead. Oscar purchased it, and the Joe Calliou quarter, in 1928.

Three children, Louis, Albert and Nellie, were born on this farm. Oscar recalls, with a chuckle, that with each new youngster, another room was added to the home. As the children came of school age, each child attended the Lindsay school, which was 1½ miles north and ½ miles west of their home.

When the "Big Depression" came, in the 1930's, the Albinati's like many others, took their homegrown wheat to be milled at Sexsmith, Alberta. This flour made excellent bread, cakes, etc. Coffee was made from roasted, ground barley, and honey was substituted for sugar. Large gardens were grown, and the family had their own milk cows, hogs and chickens. Oscar remarked on how machinery and labour was swapped among neighbors, to help keep down the cost of production.

In the line of entertainment, Mr. and Mrs. Albinati like to reminisce about the great times they enjoyed with the neighbors at dances held in the homes of: Henry Calliou, John and Eva Boyartchuck and Tom Rice. Music was donated by the Lenes Orchestra, Ernie Poirier, Tom Rice, Harry Shin, Pete Kebalo and many others.

After the depression, Albinati's bought the Tom Rice place and farmed it and other rented land in the district.

Mr. Albinati was very active in community events. He worked with the U.F.A. and the A.F.U. During the late forties, he was appointed chairman on the board of directors, who were in charge of organizing and establishing a Bezanson Co-op store in the Hamlet of Bezanson.

During the late fifties, the rural telephone line, in this area, became inadequate and was in poor condition. The task of rebuilding the line, from the Smoky River to Grande Prairie, was deemed necessary. A vigorous committee, headed by Oscar as president, organized and directed the job to completion, in one short season.

The Chamber of Commerce were offering an award to a progressive farm family, who played an active part in community affairs. In 1950, sponsored by some of the neighbors of Bezanson, Mr. and Mrs. Albinati became the happy winners of this "Better Farmer Award".

Mr. and Mrs. Albinati have retired and now live in Grande Prairie, where they still take part in Church events, C.W.L. work, Old Timers Association functions and other social activities.

ALBERT AND FRANCIS ALBINATI AND FAMILY

On June 30, 1930, I was born at Bezanson, Alberta, on the farm one mile east and one-half mile north of the Bezanson store. At six years of age, I walked two miles to school, when the weather was nice. During the winter months, my sister, brother and I rode with the Robideau children. We attended Lindsay school.

In 1937, our big barn was built and many barn dances took place in the huge loft. It was a great place for youngsters to play, but in later years, we found that that same loft spelled hard work at haying time.

I received my high school education at Lindsay Sr. and my junior matriculation at St. Joseph's High School, Grande Prairie.

In 1947 and '48, I took an agricultural course in the Vermilion School of Agriculture. Later, I received my license as an Auto Body mechanic. From 1954 to 1970, I drove for Greyhound Lines, in Calgary.

It was while living in Calgary, that I met Francis Cameron, and we were married in 1968. Francis, a widow, had three children; Leah, who lives in Calgary, Rachel and Sydney, who both live in Edmonton. Our son, Andre, was born in 1969, and lives at home.

We bought land; 17-71-7 W6th, in the Dimsdale district, and here we farm.

GERMAINE ALBINATI

In 1948, I married Hudson Adair, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Adair of Teepee Creek. We had three children, Dianne, Maureen and Rick. We farmed at Teepee Creek until 1955, then moved to Grande Prairie. Hudson worked for Canadian-Kellogg in construction of the oil refinery and then for Shell Oil in the refinery until its closing about Christmas of 1964. We then, purchased a farm west of Grande Prairie in 1958. In later years, Hudson combined livestock dealing and buying for Peace River Livestock Coop and Alberta Hog Producers Marketing Board with farming.

Germaine, at time of writing, has served 20 years with the court system where she is Clerk of the Province and Family and Juvenile Court for the Grande Prairie Judicial District.

Dianne married Ralph Sebastian, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Sebastian of Wembley in 1969, they have since made their home in Edmonton. Ralph operates his own trucking business and Dianne is a Western Canada supervisor for Dalony's Ladies Wear.

Maureen married Gerald Anderson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Anderson of Grande Prairie. In 1969, they went to Salisbury, Rhodesia for two years where Gerry taught high school and Maureen followed her hairdressing career. When they returned, Gerald decided to give up teaching and became a Chartered Accountant, opening an office with a friend in 1975. They have a four year old son, Jay Anthony, and a one year old daughter, Michelle Dawne.

Rick spent his first year out of high school travelling overseas and among other places, spent several months in Israel during the 1973 war. The next year he enrolled in Grande Prairie Regional College where he was active in school politics. He was President of the Student's Union the first year and the Student's Representative on the Board of Governors the second year. At the present time he is majoring in English at the University of Lethbridge.

LOUIS AND JOSEPHINE ALBINATI AND FAMILY

Lou, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Albinati, was born in Bezanson. He was raised on the farm, and received his elementary schooling, Grades 1 to 7, at Lindsay. He took Grades 8 to 10 at Lindsay High school, which was located 1½ miles west of the present Bezanson Hamlet. Lou took three years of High school and Business Education, at St. Joseph High school, Grande Prairie, and graduated in June of 1947.

During the last three years of high school, he worked, after school hours, at Harry's Auto Body Shop. Lou spent the summer of 1947, around Ottawa and Carleton Place, Ontario. That fall, he returned to take one more year of apprenticeship at Harry's Auto Body Shop.

In May, 1950, Lou had completed his mechanic's training, under the guidance of Andy Madsen, at the Grande Prairie Garage. During these two years, he took projectionists training, in the evenings, at the Capitol Theatre, Grande Prairie.

In July of 1950, Lou started his own auto body shop and, in December, he and Anne Chrenek, of Sexsmith, were married. During the next twelve years, their family of three boys and three girls were born. Anne passed away in September of 1963.

Daryl is taking engineering at the Unversity of Alberta, Edmonton. Beverly will be graduating, in Education, from the U. of A., this April. Evan, who is employed in Lou's Auto Body, is in 3rd year auto body mechanics and will be returning to N.A.I.T., this fall for courses in Engineering Technology. Mareene and Arlie, who are employed in Edmonton, plan to further their education. Ronald is attending Jr. High in Grande Prairie.

Lou and Josephine Domaritzki were married in July of 1965. They have two children: Natalie, in grade

4, attends St. Gerards school, Grande Prairie, and Christopher, who will be five years old on May 1st. Lou still operates Lou's Auto Body and Joe'l Distributors in Grande Prairie. The family live in their new home on a 240 acre farm on the east boundary of Grande Prairie.

NELLIE (ALBINATI) LYSON

Nellie was born on August 19, 1931 at Bezanson. She went to school at Lindsay, and completed her high school education at St. Joseph's, Grande Prairie. In 1948 and 49, she took a Home Economics course at the Vermilion School of Agriculture.

When she became interested in hair styling, she moved to Kelowna, B.C. to learn the trade. Her first position was in North Vancouver, in 1950. Later, Nellie returned to take up work at Nels Todds Salon, in Calgary. While there, she entered and won, many hair styling competitions.

In 1953, Nellie moved to Spokane, Washington, and worked at Bon Marche, for two years before returning to Jasper Park Lodge, in Jasper. She was employed there with a new branch of Nels Todd's until the winter. Then, she was with the 'Select Coiffure', of Spokane, until the fall of 1958.

During that summer, Nellie took a two-month, well-earned, holiday in Europe. She visited relatives in Luxembourg, and spent some time in Italy. She enjoyed the World's Fair in Brussels and was in on the Centennial celebration at Lourdes.

She spent the winter of 1959 by the sun drenched beach of Waikiki, Honolulu, Hawaii, working in the Elizabeth Arden Beauty Salon. She returned to Spokane in the spring to marry Allen Lyson. They now have six children; Lori, Valerie, Carl, Janet, Sharon and Brian.

Nellie works as a wife, mother and homemaker and husband, Allen, works for Kaisier Aluminium, in the Spokane Valley.

CHARLES THOMAS AMES

I was born in Manitoba, the second son of Samuel Ryerson Ames and Marilda Whelpton. When I was a young man, an article in the Winnipeg Free Press caught my eye. It said "Go West, young man, go West", and, although the newspaper article was pushing Pouce Coupe as having endless amounts of good homestead land, I only got as far as Grande Prairie. I came on the third passenger train to arrive there, from Edmonton. Grande Prairie, of course, was the end of the steel, in those days. I stopped off at the Livery stable, and met a fellow there named Tom Smith. He told me that I didn't need to go as far as Pouce Coupe for homestead land; there was land, and lots of it, right near where he had his. He was about 20 miles east of Grande Prairie, near the present Bezanson townsite. I filed on S.W. 15-72-3 W.6th, in June, 1916, for myself, and also filed by proxy for my brothers, George, Fred and Roy.

I spent the winter, with Paddy Gallager, at the old Goodwin stopping place, on the east bank of the Big Smoky River. We score-hacked and broad-axed building logs for many different farmers. We also did some trapping. Our Christmas dinner treat was a beaver, that we'd picked up off the road, that someone had recently run over. It made good eating; if you don't believe me, try it sometime. Paddy made a deal with me; if I bought the strychnine, we would go fifty-fifty on the catch. We got a black fox, 7 cross-foxes, a lynx and a beaver. The black fox was a real prize. Frank Turner, from Kleskun Hill, offered Paddy a team of bays, good harness and a sleigh, with a two-decked box on it, in exchange for the pelts. He refused it. Instead, he went to Grande Prairie to sell them, and came back with ten pounds of beans and a big headache.

In the Spring of 1917, I tail-sawed, for Shortreed and Rosser, at the Wapiti river, with a 110 Case Steamer, while my chum, Ern Frod, operated the planer at the Simmonette. Rosser also owned land so, during the summer, I had my first experience of plowing with a walking plow. Shortreed and Rosser had a Gold, Shapley and Muir gas engine; hopper cooled. They were out brushing with it and ruined 4 spark plugs in about three hours. Rosser came into the shack to punch the bread down and he had tears in his eyes, because he had only 2 plugs left. After telling me the story he said, "If you can do any better, take it!" On my way out, I picked up a piece of tarp and covered the hoppers. I plowed the rest of the season without losing a plug.

In the Fall, I went back home to Manitoba for the harvest. Ern Ford and I bought a steam threshing outfit there. After harvest was over, I came back to Grande Prairie by train. Once again, I worked for Shortreed and Rosser, all winter at their sawmill on the Wapiti; running the 110 Case Steamer. Somehow, that steamer didn't sound right to me so, while Shortreed was hammering a saw, I took the piston out and the rings were in 7 pieces. It took a week to get new rings, but it worked, like a charm, for the rest of the winter.

We had our good times too. The very first dance, as I recall, was at the home of Charlie Stewart's Dad, George Stewart. Ern Ford was a self-taught, but very accomplished, fiddler and played for many dances. We went, on horse-back, to quite a few dances. I still laugh when I think of one particular young lady and I stomping a little too hard over the cellar door and falling through.

I peeled the logs for my house, on my homestead, then took off, once again, to Manitoba. The First World War was on, so I joined the Army. I was sent overseas in January of 1918. In France, I got wounded on September 2, 1918. When they say "War is hell", they're perfectly correct. I can still hear those bullets whistling all around me.

I was discharged in 1919. My brother, George, and my chum, Ern Ford, also got back safely. Ern and I bought a new Sawyer-Massey steam threshing outfit and, after harvest around home in Manitoba, we shipped the steamer to Grande Prairie. We moved it out to Bezanson and sawed lumber with it at the Smoky 'till the spring of 1920.

In the spring, we started breaking land on our homesteads. Roughly 50 acres were broken; about 10 acres each for Ern, Roy, George, Fred and myself. We used three, 22 inch breaking plows that we'd brought up with us and also a double disc that we'd bought from



Sawing lumber at the old Bezanson townsite in 1920. Charlie Ames and Ern Ford's outfit.

Mr. Macklin. In July, we broke and disced 4 miles of road, also with the steamer, 3 miles west from Moose Nellis' slough and 1 mile south. Those 3 miles are where the black top is now. We even put culverts in where they were needed. During this busy summer, we built Ern's house and a barn for me. Many years later, this house of Ern's belonged to Henry Ford. It burned down only a few years ago.

In the fall, we threshed for 62 farmers, an average of 3 a day, and we had even gone as far as the top of Kleskun Hill. After harvest, we moved our trusty old work-horse, the Sawyer-Massey, to the old Bezanson town-site. We logged from the Simmonette and sawed them in the spring. We stored our lumber on the bank of the Smoky river. One night, we decided to move the outfit out. It was lucky we did, as the river rose during the night and the sawdust pile and the edgings all went down river.

Jim Kimberley was the ferryman there at the time. He was also our chief cook and bottle washer while we were planning. Jim wanted the ferry in the river. He did make a few trips successfully. Then the river rose some more, and pulled the "deadman" anchor out of the far bank of the river. The ferry swung down the river the length of the cable. Jim had me go down with the steam engine and pull the ferry up to the landing. Later that spring (1921), they moved the ferry down to Goodwin's Crossing. We rafted 20,000 feet of lumber down to the Crossing and Bill Moody ran a lumber yard for us. That summer, we broke more homestead acres and in the fall, repeated the rounds of threshing.

It was during this time, that I decided to leave everything and look for greener pastures. I filed on land in Main Pine River, 90 miles into the Peace River Block of B.C. That winter and into spring, I ran a steam engine for Landry's sawmill at Doe River, B.C.

In the spring of 1922, I went prospecting with Slim Hayner and Tom Smith. With pack horses, we went from Beaverlodge, across Nose Mountain, all the way to Brule Lake (near Hinton). There, we sold our horses and took the train to Kamloops. I worked on a pile driver, putting in bridges for the CNR on their line from Kamloops to Kelowna. Also, we built a 6-car barge on the Okanagan Lake. That summer, I worked for Lougheed Placer Mining in Barkerville. One day, while washing gravel by hydraulic, before our very eyes, a moose, chased by some dogs, came crashing over the bank and with a broken horn and bleeding head, landed in our flume and got piped through. At clean-up we got 8 quarts of gold out of this flume, so moose wasn't all that went through there.

Next summer, 1923, I went to Prince Rupert and after a trip to Hydro, Alaska. I came back to Prince Rupert, where I met a fellow by the name of Paddy Quinn. He talked me into going back to Barkerville to do some prospecting.

Our stay was brief, and from there, we carried on to Vernon, B.C. The Government opened the Indian Reserve along the Okanagan Lake, for prospecting. Paddy and I were on the grounds when it opened and we dug a "glory hole" on our claims. I registered our claims at Vernon as the Charleston Group. One day we were going to the lake for a swim when I saw the Ogopogo. It was fairly close to the shore and had caught a mud hen. It was exposed about 24 feet, and that still wasn't the end of it!

In Kamloops, I ran into my old pals, Smith and Hayner, and we all hoboed to Calgary and then on to Vulcan. I ran Archie Middleton's steamer on his threshing outfit. That winter, I went to Vancouver and built plank partitions in ocean liners for hauling grain in.

The following fall, I went back to Vulcan for threshing.

In 1926, Tom Smith and I took our $50. Model T to Meadow Lake. From Meadow Lake, we made the 6-week canoe trip to Buffalo Narrows and back. We brought back a 5-gallon can of tar sands. That summer, I got work, firing oil-well boilers, at Turner Valley, and there I stayed for 16 years.

One summer, I visited back home and met Elsie Cox, of Justice, Manitoba, whom I married in December, 1931. The following year, our one and only child, Prince, was born. Still longing for the Peace River Country, I decided, in 1944, to move my little family to Bezanson. I built a home on Ern Ford's homestead, and settled there, but not for very long. I got a job, as steam engineer, for Moon and Morrison (Crooked Creek Lumber Company) and we spent seven years there. My wife was book-keeper and ran a small store. The population there was 125.

In 1949, Charlie Moon and I bought a D7 Caterpillar and worked for oil companies. As work was plentiful, we bought two D8's and a D6. We dissolved our partnership in 1963 at which time, I retired.

One of my first interests, after retirement, was to track down some antique machinery, and other things, but particularly the 25-75 Sawyer-Massey Steamer, that I had once owned. I finally did find it and it is truly the "heart" of my collection. It had not been idle in the intervening years as, for one thing, it had sawed lumber for Jack Fitzpatrick's sawmill for many years. It is still in good running order.

In the meantime our son, Prince, married Donna Ford, in 1952. He had his own trucking business and they had a house in our yard. Our happiness wasn't to last, however, when a freak accident took the life of our son. In July, 1955, he was playing baseball for the Bezanson Home Team, when he was struck, on the head, by a pitched ball. He died enroute to Edmonton, by plane. He left behind his wife, and three children, Jean, Ernie and Howard.

At present, our granddaughter, Jean, lives in our yard with her husband, Chris Miller, and their son, Aaron (our great-grandson). Our grandson, Ernie, married Debbie Pudlowski. They live in Edmonton, and have a daughter, Tara Lee (our great-granddaughter). Our grandson, Howard, is still single and working, in Kelowna, B.C., doing carpentry.

DONALD ROY AMES

Except for the first six years, I have been in Bezanson all my life. I went to school at Lindsay and got out, as soon as I could, to help out on the farm. I worked for my uncle, C. T. Ames, as a cat-operator and later as a truck driver. In 1951, I married Rose Potrebenko, who was a stenographer working in Grande Prairie, where we met. We spent the first two winters, of our married life, at the Moon and Morrison Sawmill at Crooked Creek, for which I was driving truck at the time. I hauled lumber to the planer mill in Grande Prairie and usually made two trips a day. I got paid $5.00 a trip and from this $10.00 a day, we were able to save money. Nowadays, there are young men making nearly that, or more, per hour.

In May of 1953, we bought the land owned by Mabel and Harry Beaver (the original homestead of Arthur Cumberworth, Mabel Beaver's father) and have lived there ever since. In June of the same year, we became the proud parents of our first son, Kenneth. Those were lean years for us, as we had hardly any machinery with which to farm. The reason we chose to buy the Beaver land in the first place, was so I could use my Dad's machinery. However, my Dad sold out the following year and so we borrowed this-and-that from all our good friends and neighbors. I'm sure they were sick of us. However, many years later, we felt that we finally "had it made" when a neighbor came over to borrow something from us.

In 1955, our one and only daughter, Debbie, was born to us and then in 1957, our second son, and last child, Tom, was born. The fall that Tom was born, more than 6 inches of wet snow fell on the third of October and we only had 6 acres harvested. This was a real blow, but even so, a farm payment was made that fall. We had quite a few pigs and that is what saved us. We had taken Harry Beaver's advice and had a "little of everything", on the farm, so that if one thing failed, another didn't.

Rose and I have driven a school bus, to the Bezanson School, since 1959, but due to bus route changes, people moving away, etc. have yet to drive the child of a child. School bus driving has changed considerably from those first years. The buses were old clunkers and the only all-weather road was Hi-way 34. Now our roads are all first-class and the bus we drive is new and fully automatic.

Our children are all doing reasonably well. Ken works in the Communications Department of the C.N., in the C.N. Tower in Edmonton. Debbie is a Computer Operator at Prairie Computing, in Grande Prairie. Tom works for Frontier Steel in Grande Prairie.

FRED AND EDNA AMES — by Fred E. Ames

My parents, Samuel and Marilda Ames, of Huron County, Ontario, migrated to Manitoba to farm in Brookdale. A family, of eleven children, was born here. Wm. Nelson died in infanthood. The names of the other children can be found in the "George Ames" story.

In 1918, we heard of the great opportunities of the Peace River area and the land available for homesteading. Bros., Charles and George, came West and filed on land for Roy and I, by proxy.

In August, 1919, I came west by train; arriving five days later, in Grande Prairie, where Mr. George Stewart (father of Chas Stewart Sr.), gave me a lift to Bezanson. I was 18 years old and eager to take on farming on my own. The first two winters were spent building a cabin, on the bank of the Big Smoky, at Goodwin crossing. From here, Charlie, George, Roy and I logged, and sawed lumber, in the 'Ford and Ames' sawmill which was powered by their steamer. From spring to late fall, we brushed and cleared our

homesteads, by hand, with the trusty axe and brush-hook. This was real backbreaking labour. The old steam engine was put to work, on a breaking plough, to turn the sod. From lumber we had made, I built the first part of the house, in 1922, that was to be my home for the next 38 years.

On November 25, 1901, Edna's father, John Delany, (born April 7, 1874 at Maydock, Ont.) married Alberta Martel (born Mar. 25, 1885, at Chelmsford Village). They farmed at Thessalon, Ont. It was here their family, of eight, was born. Annie, who passed away at 15 years of age, was their first child. Florence died as a baby. The other children were: Lila, Edna, Ada, John, Archie and Elvin. Mr. Delany died on May 23, 1918.

On June 3, 1919, Edna Delany left her birthplace with her widowed mother, brothers and sisters, to come West, by train, bound for Grande Prairie. They arrived on June 18th. Her mother was met by Mr. Isaac Boyer, whom she married, and the family moved into his log cabin at Kleskun Hill. Edna continued her education at East Kleskun school, with Miss Dorothy Morrison as teacher.

When her step-father became ill, Edna quit school and worked in the neighborhood to help support the family. She rode horseback to work. While working for my sister, Mrs. Bill Ford, Edna and I became acquainted.

On June 24, 1925, Edna anf I drove a horse and buggy to Clairmont, to be married by Rev. Thomson, in the United Church. George and Thelma Ames stood up for us.

After our marriage, the second part was built onto the house. Many friends gathered at our house to play cards or visit. Sometimes, I would grab the old fiddle and everyone would dance 'till daybreak. In winter, neighbors would gather at one home, pile into a large grain tank drawn by a four-up, and head for the Bezanson, or 'Club' hall, to dance the night away. No-one noticed the cold, for everyone joined in song on the way to the dance and on the trip home.

In 1927, I bought my first car; a Model T Ford, with side curtains and wooden spokes. Anti-freeze was unheard of, so winter driving, in below zero weather, was risky. This was before the snow ploughs came into use. Winter roads were usually impassable; thus a team and cutter was our best mode of transportation.

On January 27, 1927, our first child was born. Edith, who is now Mrs. Milfred Patterson, and still lives in Bezanson. On May 17, 1928, Russell, our only son, was born. He married Joan McLaughlin and they now live in Grande Prairie. Ruby, our second daughter, was born on November 26, 1929. She became Mrs. Tom Stark. When he passed away, she married Eldan Wurtz. They now live at New Fish Creek. Ten years later, on November 19, 1939, our last child, Fern, was born. She is married to Ron Joyce and they reside in Stettler, Alta. We have twelve great-grandchildren and sixteen, living, grandchildren; one baby boy died at the age of five days.

After spending 38 years in the same house, we moved ¼ mile west and built another home in which, for the first time, we had indoor plumbing.

In June, 1975, we had our 50th wedding anniversary, and many relations and neighbors helped us celebrate.

It was just in the last year that all, but five acres, of our land was sold. We are now retired and living on these 5 acres at Bezanson.

AMES GEORGE AND THELMA AND FAMILIES

George Franklin — born Sept. 29, 1897 in Brookdale, Manitoba. Died May 19, 1966. Father — Samuel Ryerson Ames — deceased 1931. Mother — Marilda Ann Whelpton — deceased 1921. Brothers and Sisters — Oldest to Youngest — Roy, Charles, Harold, George (Dad), Fred, William, Vera, Maude, Mildred, Myrtle, Ruby.

Thelma Louise — Born March 5, 1898 in Graham, Minnesota, U.S.A. Died October 4, 1973. Father — Peter Sidney Robideau. Mother — Sophia Elizabeth Deshaw. Brothers and Sisters — Oldest to Youngest — Edward, Irving, Carl, Earl, Roy, Bill, Earnest, Alex, Lillian, Stella, Hattie, Thelma (Mom), Mable.

George served overseas in World I. Met Thelma in Bezanson and were married in Edmonton, January 30,



Mr. and Mrs. George Ames.



Ferry Inn — owned and operated by George and Thelma Ames.



Mrs. George (Thelma) Ames and her hungry crew.



Tom and Veryl (Ames) McEwen and sons.

1922, then came back to Bezanson and lived on the homestead.

Lost first child Richard Irving at birth October 20, 1922. Glen Herbert — October 5, 1924. William George — December 13, 1925 — Passed away at 13 months. Veryl Elizabeth — March 8, 1927. Irving Franklin — April 28, 1928 (All born in Bezanson) (We have 88 first cousins).

Lived on the farm most of their lives, the kids went to Lindsay School. In 1941, they bought the Ferry Inn at the Big Smoky Crossing. At that time, the kids went to Revina School. In 1942, they had a very bad mishap as the Inn burned to the ground. At that time, George was selling Familex Products. Dad liked to dance, play hockey and baseball. After the fire, they went back to the farm.

I, Veryl, went to work for Mrs. Jack Styles in Grande Prairie. From there I went and worked for Mrs. Jack Patterson and then to Mrs. Halverson's Beauty Salon.

Then we all moved to Pouce Coupe, B.C. (except for Glenn, who had left for the army), to run the kitchen and dining room in the Hart Hotel. I waited tables for them. They then moved to Dawson Creek, B.C. where Dad drove a truck on the Alaska Highway. Mom did pastry cooking at the Fish and Chips Cafe and I was waitress there. After a couple of years, they moved back to the farm and built a new home. I remained in Dawson Creek as I had a good job in a Variety and Confectionary Store. I came back a year later and went to cook at a sawmill with Mom. Met Tom (Thomas Lindsay McEwen) born August 24, 1926 in Central Butte, Saskatchewan. (Where most of his relatives still are.) We married on December 31, 1946 in Grande Prairie. My brother, Glenn, and Tom's sister, Margaret, stood up for us. We have three sons.

Murray Ames — Born — August 6, 1947 in Grande Prairie. Gordon Ames — Born June 17, 1949, in Grande Prairie and Alvin Thomas — Born — January 22, 1951, in Grande Prairie. We spent most of our lives in Grande Prairie, but we lived a few years in Bezanson where we had a blacksmith shop and a service station. We lived one year in Fairview, and one year in Dawson Creek, B.C. where Tom bought a truck and welder and has had a portable welding rig since. We also lived two years in Hay River, N.W.T. and shorter times in different places. Tom has been welding for over 30 years. He has also farmed, drove grain truck and worked in saw mills plus; has his auto body repair ticket and has instructed welding classes. Tom has two sisters; Kate and Marg, both living in Edmonton. I have worked at Northern Plywoods, and in the shoe department at Woolworth's. Tom and I were Foster Parents for 14 years. We have our own home in Grande Prairie and our three boys are all now married. We have four grandchildren.

Murray — married Cheryl Kay Bain on June 2, 1967. Born June 16, 1948 in Valemount, B.C. They have two children: Daughter — Tracy Leigh — Born March 15, 1968, in Grande Prairie. Son — Trent Thomas — Born May 4, 1972 in Grande Prairie. Murray is a welder by trade. He is now manager of Byers Machine and Welding in Edmonton. Cheryl is secretary in the office. Before moving to Edmonton they lived in Grande Prairie, Hinton, and Ft. McMurray.

Gordon — married Kathleen May MacAuley on March 6, 1971 — Born September 22, 1951, in Grande Prairie. They have two children: Daughter — Sandi Lynn, born September 27, 1971, in Grande Prairie. Son — Jason Stanley — born December 7, 1973, in High Level. Gordon is an auto body mechanic but is now employed as an adjuster for Royal Insurance in Edmonton. Kathy is assistant manager for Avco Finance. They lived in High Level 2½ years, where Gordon owned his own business (Gord's Collision Repairs) and home. They then moved to Kamloops, B.C. for one year, came back to Grande Prairie, bought a home and now are moving to Edmonton where Gordon's job is. They both play in a band.

Alvin — married Sandra Marian Steinke on March 24, 1973. Born July 8, 1951, in Sexsmith. As yet, they have no children. Alvin is a finish carpenter and has his own business (McBee Contractors) in Grande Prairie. They own their own home and have lived in Grande Prairie, since their marriage, except for a few months in Edmonton. Sandra is employed at the Treasury Branch.

Glenn — joined the army in 1943, and went overseas. He returned in 1946, two years after the war ended, as he remained in the occupation force in Germany. When he returned, he married Mavis Maude Boyd on August 15, 1947. Born October 10, 1927, in Crystal Creek. They have three children. Randall Glenn — Born in Grande Prairie — April 13, 1948; Leonard Fredrick — Born in Grande Prairie — March 1, 1950; Bonny Marlene — Born in Grande Prairie — May 17, 1951.

Glen and Mavis and family lived on the farm most of their lives; then sold the farm and bought a home in Grande Prairie; moved August 26, 1974, from Bezanson. Glenn passed away October 5, 1975. Their children are all now married and they have three grandchildren.

Randall — married — Diana Alice Gowdun on July 1, 1971. Born November 19, 1948, in Drumheller. They have two children: Son — Ryan Douglas — Born June 3, 1973, in Grande Prairie. Daughter — Melissa Lee — Born May 8, 1975, in Kamloops, B.C. Randy is a heavy duty mechanic, has been promoted to an inside sales manager for Par Dee Equipment. They own their own home in Calgary; previous to that they lived in Kamloops, B.C. Diana is a hairdresser.

Leonard — married — Theresa Irene Barschel on December 6, 1975. Born April 16, 1955, in Grande Prairie. As yet they have no children. Lenny is a city policeman in Calgary, where they now live. Terry is a tourist guide and at present is attending Mount Royal College.

Bonny — married — Victor Alex Romaniuk on November 9, 1974. Born Feb. 19, 1941, in Birch Hills, Sask. They have one child. Daughter — Candice June — Born July 13, 1975, in Grande Prairie. Vic is a heavy duty operator. Bonny has steady employment being mother and housewife. They own their own home in Grande Prairie.

Irving (Tyke) — is a welder, he worked for Park Brothers for fourteen years and is now welding in the County shop in Grande Prairie. He is; if I guess right; "A Great White Hunter". He is also interested in horsehoes, baseball, hockey, curling and other things too numerous to mention.

Tyke married — Alice (Allie) Eileen Olson on August 6, 1952. Born April 18, 1936 in Bezanson. They still live on the home place. They have four daughters: Louise Inga — Born in Grande Prairie on January 27, 1953. Beverly Eileen — Born in Grande Prairie on February 6, 1956. Irene Livia — Born in Grande Prairie on April 18, 1959. Colleen Gail — Born in Grande Prairie on February 1, 1964.

Louise — married John Brian Perkins on May 19, 1973. Born December 16, 1950 in Grande Prairie. They had two children. Son — Troy John — Born July 6, 1974 in Grande Prairie. Deceased August 22, 1974. Daughter — Lea Susan — Born July 5, 1975 in Grande Prairie. Louise is an Officer Manager Clerk IV for Lands and Forest in the Forest Branch. John is assistant manager in the Hardware Department in the Co-op store, Grande Prairie. They live in Grande Prairie, where they own their house trailer.

Beverly — married — Wade Harold Steinke on April 12, 1975. Born July 23, 1954, in Sexsmith. As yet they have no children. Bev is a secretary for the Grande Prairie School Division and Wade is employed with McBee Contractors.

Irene — lives at home and is presently going to Sexsmith High School. After high school, Irene is planning to enter the teaching profession.

Colleen — lives at home and is also attending Sexsmith School.

ROBERT AMES

I was born January 27, 1922, at Bezanson. I lived there until nearly age two when, in 1923, the four Ames children moved to Manitoba to live with their grandparents, the Gillespies, and other relatives I started school in Manitoba and finished grade two at the school in Douglas. In the summer of 1930, I returned to Bezanson and started school at Lindsay, in the fall.

In August of 1942, I joined the Army. Two years were spent overseas, in England, Italy, Holland and Belgium. In the spring of 1946, I got my discharge.

After being discharged, I started farming at Bezanson. For the first four or five years of farming, the summers were spent on the farm. The winters were spent at logging camps and at lumber mills.

In the fall of 1953, when the Ames' Sr. moved to the B.C. coast, I moved to the home place and have been there ever since.

Marie Bayens grew up in the Five Mile District where she completed her elementary schooling. The next three years were spent at St. Joe's, Grande Prairie, where she took her High School. From there, she went to Edmonton and took Education at the University. This was the first year that Education was taken at the University instead of at the Normal School.

In 1946, Marie started teaching at Lindsay Jr., where she stayed for two years. The next year was spent teaching Grade 1-4 at St. Joe's.

I married Marie Bayens in 1949, and we moved back to Bezanson. Since then, Marie has taught at Bezanson, off-and-on, for about twenty years.



Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ames and family.

We have five children; Betty, Jim, Allan, David and John. Betty and Allan are working in Grande Prairie, where they live. Jim is working for the Government, Dept. of Environment, in Edmonton. David and John are still at home.

WILFRED ROY AMES — 1888-1968

Wilfred Roy (Roy) Ames was the first born child of Samuel Ryerson Ames and Marilda Whelpton, whose parents came from England, to Ontario, in 1948.

Samuel R. Ames, better known as S.R., and his parents, came to Manitoba in the year 1885, where he raised his family on land near Brookdale, Manitoba. Roy was born there, in 1888.

Roy attended the Norman school, in the district of Creeford. School was finished for him, when he was old enough to help his father and neighbors with the farm work.

In 1913, he married Isabella Elizabeth Gillespie, of Douglas, Manitoba, and farmed the Robert Gillespie land, for a short time, before going to Brookdale as a mechanic. He worked at a variety of other jobs, such as running horse-drawn school van.

Following the First World War, his brother, Charles, beckoned by the wonderful stories of the Peace River Country, came to the area now known as Bezanson, and filed on a homestead, by proxy, for Roy. This homestead was to remain his home until retirement from farming. Roy made the big move to the Peace with his wife, Bella, and two daughters, Janet and Bernice, his war veteran brothers, Charles and George, his youngest brother, Fred, and a chum of Charlie's, Ernest Ford. The first two winters were spent lumbering on the Smoky River, with the summers used for breaking the land and erecting farm buildings. Roy's home was situated one mile west and one mile north of the present Bezanson store. His son, Samuel Robert (the second S.R.) was born, on this spot, in 1922, and his second son, Donald Roy, in 1923.

It was shortly after this, that tragedy struck this young, pioneering family. Roy's wife, Bella, passed away Christmas Eve, 1923. Bella's mother, Janet Gillespie, of Douglas, Manitoba, took all four children back to Manitoba with her and proceeded to raise her "second" family, until Roy married again. He married Beatrice Nichol, of Brookdale, Manitoba, in 1928. The re-united family continued growing up on the old homestead in Bezanson.



Roy Ames ploughing with 'Happy Farmer' tractor — 1929.



Roy Ames with sons, Donald and Robert, digging a well.

Roy was most widely known for his threshing outfit, with which he traveled around the countryside. This was a very important part of harvesting, in those days, as threshing outfits weren't all that numerous. Only those who can remember these threshing occasions, can truly appreciate the thrill that came when you heard the racket of the first team, wagon and rack, as it came down your own lane.

Both Beatrice and Roy were active members of the community. They were great believers in the co-operative movement and were behind the Bezanson Co-op Store all the way. Also, they were regular members of the United Church in Glen Leslie. Beatrice played the organ, faithfully, for 25 years and also taught Sunday School. Visiting here from Port Coquitlam, she still enjoys giving the old pump organ a "go-around". Roy also served as trustee on the Lindsay school board.

Besides all the other hardships of the early settlers, a good supply of water was a big head-ache; in fact, Bezanson still very grudgingly gives up water. In recent years, some wells have had to be drilled as deep as 500 feet. However, in 1946, Roy's sons, Robert and Donald, gave it a good try. They dug, by hand and a little ingenuity, but with no cribbing, a well 125 feet deep. At this point, there was water mixed with very fine sand, which couldn't be separated enough to use a pump. Also, this made it impossible to dig any farther. This well was abandoned and eventually filled in.

In the meantime, Janet took nurses training, in Edmonton, where she met her future husband, George Hawkes of Didsbury, Alberta. They were married in 1937, and settled in Virginiatown, Ontario, where George was a gold mine engineer. Bernice married Jack Dorscheid, of the Glen Leslie district, in 1932. Robert married Marie Bayens, who was teaching school at Lindsay, in 1949, and bought the "home place", from his father. Donald married Rose Potrebenko of Grande Prairie, and they settled next door to his father, on a farm bought from Mable and Harry Beaver. Roy retired from farming in 1954, and moved to Port Coquitlam, B.C. He passed away, at the ripe old age of 80, in August of 1968. His wife, Beatrice, continues to live in Port Coquitlam.

ROBERT ANDERSON

Robert (Bob) and Daisy Anderson, and son Frank moved to the Bezanson district from Dimsdale in 1930. They farmed the Clarence Field land consisting of five quarters.

There Frank attended the Lindsay School until 1934 and in 1936 the family moved back to the Dimsdale area and farmed there till 1941 when Mr. Anderson's health started to fail. They then moved into the town of Beaverlodge.

In 1944, Frank started work at the G.M.C. Garage and is still in the garage business.

Robert passed away in 1951 and wife Daisy in 1961.

Frank married Rita Gould from Hythe in 1948 and they have one daughter Janice.

WALTER ATKINSON

I was born in Edmonton in the year 1910. In 1920, along with my parents, I left Edmonton by train and came to Grande Prairie, which was the end of the railroad at that time. We went by team and wagon from there to Swan Lake, B.C., now known as Tupper. My parents homesteaded there for three years, after which we moved to Grande Prairie. It was here we came to know the Amireaux'.

I had to go to work at a young age, my first job being in Bob Nevins' feed barn helping farmers hook up their teams, feeding their horses and cleaning out the stalls, as well as exercising Bobs' race horse. George Amireaux asked me to come out and work for him, hauling his grain to Grande Prairie, and this I did. Mrs. Amireaux was working in town, so George and I batched and in the evenings he would tell me about his Klondike experiences. While there, I played the banjo at a few dances. The fiddlers I played with were Tom Rice, Ernie Ford and Fred Ames. Shortly, I returned to Grande Prairie, but many were the times I would saddle up my horse and ride out to visit the Amireaux, and many pleasant hours were spent at their place.

After returning to Grande Prairie, I worked at Ed Lynes' meat market for a few years, leaving for a while during the depression years to homestead and spend some time in the Crooked Creek area. After this, some time was spent in Peace River working for the Peace River Meat Company, a few months at the Grande Prairie Meat, before joining the Army. I spent some years overseas and after the war worked for the Grande Prairie Meat Plant again. I married Marie Lae, from East of Edmonton, and we have two boys, Harley and Dennis.

We spent one winter at Hythe, where I worked at Lee Bordens' Locker plant, then we went to Valleyview, where we opened our own business and where we spent the next eleven years.

We have been in Vernon, B.C. for the past eleven years, but we still like to go up to our land at Crooked Creek each spring and fall.

Dennis lives in Abbotsford, B.C. and Harley is presently in Regina, Sask. Neither have married as yet.

VICTOR AUCLAIR

Victor Auclair was born November 2, 1943, at Wainwright, Alberta, and took the majority of his schooling in Strathmore, Alta. After he finished grade 12, he joined the Canadian Air Force and was stationed at Clinton, Ontario, for one year. After which he came to the Peace River Country and chose a career in the field of electrical mechanics. When he completed his apprenticeship in 1973, he was employed by a Grande Prairie firm, G. P. Rewind Ltd. 'til March 1976.



Theona, Eugene, Vic and Scott Auclair.

On July 18, 1964, he married Theona Valin; born April 25, 1945, daughter of Elmer and Edith Valin of Grande Prairie. Theona attended various Grande Prairie schools for her education. From school she started working for the local radio station, C.F.G.P. In April, 1966, she started working for Alberta Government Telephones, where she is presently employed as a Commercial Assistant Manager.

Vic and Theona have two children; Eugene, born November 13, 1964, and Scott, born December 21, 1968. Both boys are presently attending school in Sexsmith, Alberta. The Auclairs moved from their acreage in the Flying Shot area, west of Grande Prairie, to their farm in Bezanson, on January 1, 1976. This land, S.W. 18-723 W of 6th, was previously owned by O. Albiniti.

JOSEPH BAKER

Joseph Baker was born April 8, 1861, in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was a cabinet maker and carpenter by trade. He left his homeland in 1882 at the age of 21 years, in search of his famous uncle, Alexander Baker, explorer and veteran of the American Civil War. He joined his uncle in Northern Minnesota, where they trapped, worked at logging mills, prospected for gold, traveling on foot, canoe or dogteams.

Joseph and Alexander Baker staked out about 164 acres, made up of fractions along the Rainy River running to the Koochiching Falls on the American and Canadian border, now called International Falls. Here they squatted until ten years later, and when the area was surveyed, were able to get the title to the land.

A snug log cabin was built on the Rainy River bank in sight of the water fall, and here young Joseph



Joseph Baker.

brought his petite Scotch bride, Janet Carson. The river was their highway. It was here she bore him six children, three girls, Mary (Lucy), Elizabeth Helen (Nellie) and Jane (Jennie), and three sons, Joseph A. (Bennie), E.W. (Bill) and one son who died as an infant.

In 1896, he built a large, two story frame house, which was occupied by his daughter, Jennie, up to the 1970's, some 75 years later.

They lived a real pioneer life for the first decade of their marriage. Then Joe Baker sold his timber and land, keeping an acre for his own, to the Koochiching Realty, who set up large paper and pulp mills on this property. Soon families, loggers, and many mill workers arrived. A town sprung up, with schools, stores, courthouse, hotels, bars, roads and streets. Now the city of International Falls rests on his homestead in Northern Minnesota.

In 1919, four years after the death of his beloved wife, Joseph Baker, at the age of 58, with his youngest son, Billie, came north to the Peace River Country to take up homesteading once more. He joined his daughters, Mrs. Lucy Rooney and Mrs. Nellie LaValley, in the Grande Prairie area. His land was the N.W. 36-72-3 W6th. He farmed, proved up, and took an active part in those early community events during the next eight years. He then decided to return to his favorite "Bakers' Acre" home to garden and retire. He passed away at the age of 91 years.



Mary Agnes Baker.

OSCAR BRITTON

Mr. Oscar Britton of Babcaygen, Ontario, came west to Saskatchewan about 1924, to work for the Pas Lumber Co. in winters and road construction during the summers. In 1929, Oscar, and his brother, filed on land in the Eaglesham district. As most young homesteaders did while they cleared and broke their



Mr. and Mrs. O. Britton.

land, he found it necessary to obtain jobs in order to purchase the required farm equipment.

In 1935, he went to work for Jack Connell. He recalls the Big Smoky boiling over her banks into the farm yard of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Moody. Oscar, Jack and many others were there to lend a helping hand. He tells of his first dance at the old Bezanson Hall. Mrs. Bill Ford saw this shy stranger standing alone. She invited him to dance, then introduced him to many others that evening. Oscar has many warm memories of his visits in the bustling Ford home, and still marvels at how Mrs. Ford, the kindest hostess, could make neighbors or newcomers feel so welcome.

Some years later, Oscar returned to Eaglesham. While working for Stewart Ditches, he met Ruby Toal. Ruby was teaching school in the Fox Creek S.D., five miles from Eaglesham and boarding with the Ditches. She was born and raised in Berwyn, Alberta, and attended Normal in Edmonton. Oscar and Ruby were married in 1941, and farmed in the Eaglesham district for years.

Their family of six children are:

Mrs. Ethel (Britton) McCauley of Eaglesham. She and husband, Clifford, have one daughter, Lynn Valerie.

Mrs. Florence (Britton) Hartman, Grande Prairie, has five children, Dwight, James, Tammy-Joe, Sharon and Kimberly.

Evelyn Britton is a certified nursing aid and works in British Columbia.

Marilynn Britton was a key punch operator for C.P. Airlines.

Percy Britton lives in Grande Prairie and works for Alberta Power.

Vernon Britton is on the home farm.

Oscar has retired to Grande Prairie, and enjoys visiting with friends over a cup of coffee in the Co-op. In nice weather, he journeys out to see the "Fords" and friends in Bezanson.

MARTIN AND THEODORA BOYARTCHUK — by granddaughter, Annie Oe

Martin and Theodora Boyartchuk, and their five children, came from Austria, to Canada, in 1903. They settled on a homestead in Valley River, Manitoba, where they farmed until 1919.

In the fall of 1917, Martin, taking his wife and youngest daughter, came to Grande Prairie, where he filed on a homestead, N.E. 22-72-3 W6th. He left four of his older children to take care of his farm in Manitoba. Upon arriving in Bezanson, they stayed with his daughter and son-in-law, Ksenia and Michael Hawryluk, until he built his own house. He then sold his farm in Manitoba. His three children came to Grande Prairie, bringing his stock and machinery. They also filed on homesteads. One son, Oliver, was attending school at the time, so he stayed in Manitoba and completed high school and went through law school.

After building his house, barn and chicken house, he built a mud oven for baking bread. My grandmother baked in this oven, for many years. It baked delicious bread.

Neither of my grandparents had much schooling, if



Theodora and Martin Boyartchuk — 1920's.

any, but grandfather was interested in books. He learned the alphabet and learned to read by reading the Bible. They both loved attending church (which they missed here), and doing work for the church. He loved music and sang in the choir prior to moving here. They both enjoyed gardening and growing flowers, especially roses. He also grew his own tobacco for several years. They grew a large garden. Most of it was stored in a root cellar, which he made. He also tried growing several fruits from seed, in which he succeeded with several apple trees. One was ready to produce, but it died the same year he did.

He farmed with his two sons, Charlie and John. Later, Charlie sold his homestead and returned to Manitoba. John filed on his homestead in 1923. It was N.E. 27-72-3 W6th. John and Eva both farmed, with their parents, until their parents died. Martin and Theodora had seven children; Three sons, Charlie, Oliver and John, and four daughters, Mrs. Michael (Ksenia) Hawryluk, Mrs. Nicholas (Johanna) Kochalyk, and Mrs. Steve (Mary) Sarmaga and Mrs. John (Eva) Mylyk.

John married Annie Monisterske, in 1934. They farmed this land until the forties. They had two children; a son, Ivan, and a girl, who passed away a few days after birth. His wife, Annie, passed away in



Charlie Boyartchuk and Prince.



Boyartchuk's running water when Eva used the horse to run and get it.

1941. He then sold his farm and moved to Leduc. From there, he moved to Calgary, where he worked as a welder. He now resides in Calgary and is retired. His son, Ivan, and wife, Carol, have two sons and also reside in Calgary.

Eva married John Mylyk. They farmed in the Bad Heart district until moving to Edmonton. They had two children, a son, Orest and a daughter, Caroline. Orest is now living in Vancouver. Caroline finished her education and was to start teaching. At the age of twenty, she passed away. John and Eva are both retired and living in Edmonton.

Theodora Boyartchuk was born in Austria, on March 25, 1862. She passed away on December 13, 1930. Martin Boyartchuk was born in Austria, on February 28, 1862 and passed away on February 7, 1935.

HAVILAND AND DUKISTA BULFORD — by Mrs. H. Bulford

Haviland (Avie) Bulford, came from Athens, Ontario, in 1906, took up a homestead near Jansen, Saskatchewan, and joined his brother, Stanley Bulford, who had arrived in 1905. I, Dukista (Kate) Lapesky, met Avie there, as my parents also homesteaded in Jansen. In 1915, Avie and I went to a little church in Lanigan, Saskatchewan, where we were married. Stanley sold his homestead in 1909, and Avie sold his in 1914.

In 1909, Stanley came to Edmonton and worked for his brother-in-law, Frank Allyn, who was a brick mason in Edmonton.

Then, in 1910, Stanley decided to start in over the Edson Trail to the Peace River Country from Edson, Alberta. There, he bought a horse, and when he went to get on it, the saddle wasn't cinched tight enough and Stanley fell off and broke his leg. He had to go to the hospital there, and stayed all winter. Then, his leg had healed crooked, so he had to go to Edmonton to have it reset. Stanley was scared of an anesthetic, as his father had died on the operating table after taking it, so his leg was broken and reset without any drugs taken. He started out, again, in 1911, over the Edson Trail. It was then, he started proving up a South African Scrip of land; a half-section near Clairmont Lake, which Frank Allyn had got. A lot of people bought scrips of land; men that fought in the Boer War got scrips of land from the Government. Frank Allyn told Stanley he could have half of it if he proved it up. In 1914, the scrip had been proved up: Frank Allyn owned the north quarter and Stanley kept the one by the lake.

In 1915 and 1916, Stanley went back to Saskatchewan and rented a farm from Mr. Vanwick, near Leitche's farm. Avie and I worked on a farm owned by Charlie King, a distant relative; Avie received $35 a month and I $20 a month.

In 1917, we decided to come to the Peace River area and traveled, by train, from Saskatchewan. We were on the train from Edmonton, all one night and the following day, until 10 p.m., when we arrived in Clairmont. It was December the 15th, and the temperature was 60 degrees below zero, Fahrenheit. It sure was cold! It warmed up later, and was a lovely winter. We lived on Stanley's farm in a little cookshack, owned by Tom Corlett, until we built our own home in 1918. Frank Allyn's quarter was sold to Tom Corlett. Stanley always farmed with us.



Avie and Kate Bulford taken about 1944.



Stanley Bulford on the homestead in 1911.

In 1919, we went back to Saskatchewan on a trip. We had to ride in the baggage coach to Spirit River, and then got on the passenger train. When we got back, Stanley had sold his farm for $5,500.

Then, in 1920, we moved to Abernathy's, four miles north of Grande Prairie, which we rented; the house is still there today, in 1977.

Our first child, Irene, was born, in this house, on May 29, 1920. Olive Bates was with me for a week before the baby was born, but she had a commitment to nurse somebody else in Sexsmith, so she had to leave and Irene was born that same night. Olive was a bit disappointed because she wanted to be with me; however, I had Dr. O'Brien with me.

In 1919, we all had the flu first, Avie got it, and was just getting better when the rest of us took it. Avie used to drive to Clairmont to get a nurse, the Minister's wife, Mrs. Younger, to look after us. Anthony Gowan, our neighbor, came to do our chores. One day he didn't arrive, so Avie went to check on him. He was sick with the Flu too, so Avie brought him, on a stoneboat, to our house. There were three sick men in our one small bedroom, which only had a double bed and a cot in it. Mrs. Younger came and cared for them until they were well.

Our first car, was a 18 Model, Chev 490, which we acquired in 1920. I wouldn't stay home; I had to go every time the car went. I remember one trip with the car; our neighbors, the Moores, had the same kind of car. That Sunday, we went around Bear Lake and stopped on the north side for supper. Well, it was going to rain, so we started for home. There was a wagon



Avie Bulford plowing.



Kate Bulford, Rose Harrison, Avie Bulford at Way Inn.

ahead of us. The woman, Mrs. McGleens, put up an umbrella. I don't know whether it was the cars or the umbrella that scared the horses, but they took off across the field. The wagon went over and Mrs. McGleens, who was expecting at the time, rolled out and broke her leg. We took her home and, another lady and I, stayed with her until the doctor came. Fortunately, there were no other serious injuries.

We moved to the Price-Kirpatrick farm, near Sexsmith, in 1924, where we lived in a little log house. In that same year, on October 30, our first set of twins, Harvey and Harry were born, in the Grande Prairie hospital. It was on April 5, 1926, when our second set of twins, Eleanor and Elmer were born. They were born at home and only weighed about three pounds each. Dr. Shaw and Johanna Haakstad were with me at the time. Shortly after that, Irene had diphtheria and we were all quarantined.

In 1927, we moved and rented the Wellwood place, near Clairmont.

On the Christmas of 1928, Harvey and Harry had scarlet fever, Eleanor and Elmer were sick with bronchitis, and I was trying to cook, wash and look after sick kids; then Avie took quinsy too. He came into the kitchen holding his neck and said, "You know this is the first Christmas that I won't be able to eat Christmas dinner." I said, "Well don't worry, we're not having Christmas dinner this year." I couldn't see how in the world I could cook Christmas dinner and care for everybody else too. Well, the day before Christmas, people started coming and bringing food. They brought us pies, plum pudding, buns and all kinds of things. So I cooked the turkey, and we had Christmas dinner after all.



Avie and Kate Bulford and Daisy and Robert Anderson — about 1936.

In 1929, we moved to Bezanson, and rented land; W½ of 28-72-3 W6th, from Frank Flannery, for two years, and then bought it.

In the 'Hungry Thirties', you couldn't get hold of a dollar, but we had lots to eat, milk to drink, and we made our own cheese and butter. Rooney's used to buy my butter for 25 cents a pound, and with 25 pounds a week, that would buy our sugar, tea, and tobacco for the men. Coffee was about 49 cents a pound and eggs were 2 cents a dozen. I can remember Irving Robideau taking a case of 12 dozen eggs to get one package of chewing tobacco. Once, we sold a 200 pound pig and a yearling steer, to Podulsky's for $10. At that time, we took in a load of wheat; a neighbor hauled a truck load of about 80 bushels and we got 35 cents a bushel for it. By the time we had paid for the hauling, threshing and twine, all we had left was $13.

We finally managed to save about $50, and sent it to Eaton's for material to make some clothes; there were eight of us to clothe. There were no pensions or family allowances at that time; we sure could have used them, but we managed to live through it.

We took some 30 bushels of Marquis wheat to Jack Warren's flour mill in Sexsmith. That made about 10 sacks of flour, about 50 pounds of wheatlets (which made cream of wheat) and bran and shorts. That would do us about a year, as we used about 100 pounds of flour a month. We would also get a couple of extra sacks of flour, which we traded to the Indians for moccasins. The flour mill burned down in 1946.

The first radio we got, was in 1936; we sure did like that. We used to listen to 'Ma Perkins' which was like a soap opera. We would listen to the hockey games and I can remember Howie Meeker being a big success back then.

The kids went to Lindsay school. Avie took them and, in the winter, would go and get them in a little caboose, which had a small stove in it. That was a full time job in the winter. Then, when they got old enough, they rode horseback most of the time.

There was a big slough, southwest of the house, that kept us going too. We used to get about 300 muskrats every spring and they were a good price then; about 75 cents a pelt. The trumpeter swans used to nest in the slough and we could see their nests from the house. One spring, there was so much water they could swim right in front of the barn. They finally got scared and left the slough.

I remember one incident, when Hazel Foore and her sister, Mrs. Secrest, and I were going to visit the Tempest family. It had rained a little and when the team came to one of the mud puddles, both horses lay down in it. We couldn't get them up, so Hazel jumped out, tucked her dress into her bloomers, unhitched the team and got the horses to their feet. We all had to take our shoes and stockings off and get out of the buggy, and step into the mud. Then Hazel saw a wagon coming down the road. She ran as fast as she could go, to ask for help. It was George Purves, who came to our rescue. He took us to Tempest's and they came to the door saying how pleased they were that we had come, until they saw us getting out of the wagon all mud. Harry Rogers took us back to the buggy and pulled it out. On the way home, every time we came to a mud puddle, little Donnie Foore (Hazel's son) would say, "We didn't get 'tuck 'dat time did we?"

Stanley Bulford passed away on April 18, 1949, at the age of 65 years.

Avie Bulford passed away on November 26, 1959, at the age of 72.

Harry and I remained on the farm until he passed away, on January 30, 1963, after open heart surgery. I continued to live on the farm until 1964. I bought a

house from Keith Laverick, and moved it to Grande Prairie, where I still live at the age of 81. I sold the farm to Gorden Wathen. I still enjoy doing my tatting, and I watch a lot of T.V. to pass the time.

(BULFORD) GEORGE AND ELEANOR BAIN AND FAMILY

The fourth (or was it the fifth?) child of Avie and Kate Bulford, arrived, with her twin, on April 5, 1926. At that time, we lived near Sexsmith and the noted Johanna Haakstad, came to care for Elmer and Eleanor, during their first week. Three years later, on the 6th of April, Bulford's moved to their new home at Bezanson and, we were told, the remainder of the 3rd birthday cake was included in the lunch box. Even in the midst of the confusion of moving, it was typical that the birthday cake was baked. A birthday must have the traditional cake!

I, Eleanor, took my early schooling at the Lindsay school, and most of my high school at the, newly constructed, Lindsay High. I completed my high school in Grande Prairie, graduating with 24 other students in the class of 1945. After attending the University of Alberta, I went to teach at the Grovedale school, in the spring of 1946. There, I met George Bain. We were married in June of 1947.

We have resided most of our married life, on the Bain farm at Dimsdale, with the exception of five years spent in Valemount, B.C., where George was employed with Hystad Brothers sawmills. We returned to the farm in 1959, George was employed at mills south of Grande Prairie and, later, at North Canadian Forest Industries, as a millwright.

We have eight children: Cheryl, wife of Murray McEwen, resides in Edmonton, where Murray runs a welding business and Cheryl is employed in the office. They have two children; Tracy and Trent.

Betty Gubbe has recently moved to Drayton Valley with husband, Dennis and son, Darren. Dennis works in oil well service and Betty, after several years teaching, is trying a new venture in a yard goods store.

Jody and his wife, Rita, reside in Grande Prairie, where Jody is a truck driver, and Rita works in the Royal Bank.

Ellen is married to Fred McAusland. They are living in Fort McMurray, Alta. He is working with Syncrude and she is employed in the Bank of Commerce.

Donna is married to Darrell Mayne. They reside, at Dimsdale. He is employed with his father, Ron Mayne. They have two children; Patrick and Kali.

The youngest girl, Cindy, is married to Ketih Arlint. They, too, live in Grande Prairie. Keith is employed at Proctor and Gamble and Cindy is employed with Coulthard and Associates in Grande Prairie.

Elmer and Brent are still living at home with their parents.

At present, George and Eleanor, together with their two young sons, and Jody and Rita, are looking forward to moving to Elmworth to embark on a new venture in farming and ranching.

ELMER AND ANN BULFORD AND FAMILY

Elmer Bulford and Ann Stark were married on August 20, 1947, at her father's farm at Glen Leslie. They made their home in the Bezanson district and settled on the S.E. 33-72-3 W6th.

They spent their winters at Pete Moon's lumber camp, north of Debolt, and G. Stevens camp at Big Mountain. When the children started school, Elmer worked on oil rigs in this area.

Their land had been homesteaded by W. Howe, who moved to the U.S. Clarence Field bought this land later. The first auction sale Elmer attended was Clarence Fields. E. J. Holtom was auctioneer. Mr. Field owned a tractor, so he was classed as one of the better farmers.



Harvey and Harry Bulford, Eleanor Bain, Irene Nellis and Elmer Bulford holding daughter Annette — 1963.

In the spring of 1966, while Elmer was seeding one field, Ann, Everett and Sherry were picking roots in another. At noon, Elmer walked through a narrow strip of bush to take them home for dinner. In doing so, he scared a cow moose out of the bush and nearly stepped on her new-born calf. They all had a look, then hurried home to get the camera, only to find them both gone when they got back.

Elmer and Ann, were blessed with six children; three girls and three boys. Harry James (Jim) was born in 1948. He has his own farm two miles north of the Bezanson store. He married Dorothea Fitzsimmons of Wembley. They have two girls; Teresa, age 4, and Heather, age 1. Jim was the first passenger on the north Bezanson school bus, which was driven by Roy Gouchie. Vern Gene, was born in 1950. He took up electronics and worked installing computers for five years, but returned home and bought a farm of his own. Janet Eleanor was born in 1955. She (Mrs. William Doll) took up hairdressing and now lives in Grande Prairie. They have two little girls; Liza, age 2 and Katie, age 1. Everett Elmer was born in 1958, and works at the Plywood mill in Grande Prairie. Annette Elaine, born in 1960, and Sherry Rose, born in 1961, both attend Sexsmith High school, and are at home.

HARVEY AND ANNIE BULFORD AND FAMILY

I was born on October 30, 1924, when we lived near Sexsmith. I had a twin brother, Harry. In 1941, I got a job threshing with Dederich's, where I met Mike's daughter, Annie, who was doing the cooking. Then, in October, 1943, I joined the Army. I was discharged in 1946.

After a few more falls of stooking and threshing for Dederich's, Annie and I were married, in 1947, in St. Joseph's Chapel, in Grande Prairie. We moved on to a quarter that Harry and I had bought, in 1945, from John Diederich (Annie's Uncle); the N.W. 33-72-3 W6th. We bought a house from Maurice Stewart and moved it on to the farm. We lived there until May, 1959, when we bought the late John Diederich's half section; the W½ 19-72-3 W6th, and moved there.

Before the children went to school, we would spend the winters in the bush, at different sawmills over the years, owned by Moon's, Bink's, and Norton's. When we started raising cattle, we had a full-time job at home in the winters. After making renovations to the house, and getting the conveniences of running water and a furnace, we still farm there, with the help of Melvin and Grant, who live just a matter of steps away.

On June 11, 1948, our first daughter, Lynne Marie, was born. She spent her first year of school at East Kleskun and grades two to nine at the Bezanson school. She took her high school at St. Joseph's, in Grande Prairie. Lynne married Gerald Oe on November 10, 1967, and is our closest neighbor, living on the same section. They have three children; Kelvin, age 8, Michelle, age 5, and Bradley, age 3.



Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Bulford, Melvin, Grant, Beverly, Lynne Harold, Annie and Harvey — 1972.



1941 — Elmer Bulford, Harry Bulford, Germaine Albinati, Mae Nellis, Vern LaValley and Harvey Bulford.

Our second child, a son, Melvin Douglas, was born on February 21, 1950. He went to Bezanson, St. Joe's and Sexsmith for his schooling. He married Marion Perry, on January 21, 1972. They have two children; Colleen, age 4 and Stanley, age 2.

Grant Joseph was born on March 25, 1951. He also went to Bezanson, St. Joseph's and Sexsmith schools. He joined the the R.C.M.P. in April of 1971, and spent five years in the force, stationed at Haney, B.C. There, he met Kathleen McGreevy, whom he married on June 30, 1972. They have two children; Monica, age 4 and Tammy, age 2. They came home in April, 1976, to try their luck at farming.

Our next daughter, Beverly Ann, was born on August 2, 1957. She also went to school at Bezanson and Sexsmith, and is still a 'Miss' presently employed, in Grande Prairie, at Prairie Computing.

Our last addition, Harold Eric, was born on July 31, 1963, and is presently in grade eight, in Sexsmith school.

JAMES BURNS

Jimmy Burns, a fine Scotsman, served in the first World War, in the Scottish Regiment. After his discharge from the army, he homesteaded in the Lindsay district in 1919. His land was N.E. 25-72-3 W6th and his soldier's grant was S.E. 36-72-3 W6th. Through his farm, to the Smoky river, runs the well-known Burn's Canyon.

Jimmy was a frequent visitor at the Elmer Moody home. When he departed for a visit to Scotland, he left his service kilts to be forwarded to him later. No one has heard from him again.

BURT-LILLIAN KIRNER

In 1905, I came west with my parents Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Burt, Sr. to where Grande Prairie stands today. In those days it was only a little trading post. My dad took up land on what is now the Grande Prairie Cemetery. In 1907, we left here to settle on my brother Tom's homestead, known for years as Burt's Hill, in the Bezanson area on the banks of the Big Smoky River. There were no schools, and very lonely for it wasn't until about 1912 that white settler came into our area. Much later, the Lindsay school was built and I finished my schooling there.

In 1940, I married August Kirner from Goodwin, Alberta. August was born in Baden, Germany and came to Canada to farm. We raised two daughters Mary and Hilda. They attended school at Goodwin and Debolt. In 1956 we sold our farm and moved to Abbotsford, B.C. Here our girls finished their education.

Daughter Mary married Elvin Ratzloff of Abbotsford. Their three children are Clark, Connie and Robert. They now reside in Anaheim, B.C.

Hilda married Al Friesen and live in Lumby, B.C. Their children are Randy, Barbara and Debra.

Mother and Father passed away and now rest in the Grande Prairie Cemetery.

My only brother, Tom, was born 1896 in England; After coming to Canada, finished his schooling at Islay, Alberta. He farmed and live with his parents. Tom never married, and after our parents death he sold the farm and moved to Edmonton. In 1970, he passed away at the age of 74 years.

Wel August and Lillian, return often to visit old friends and neighbors on both sides of Big Smoky.

BURT (OLIVE JENSEN)
OLIVE (BURT) JENSEN

In the early 1900's, I came to the Grande Prairie area with my folks. Our mode of travel was by team and wagon, in which were all our household goods. Sister, Lillian, and I; on horseback; drove our herd of cattle to our new home place, north of Bezanson.



The Tom Burt family.



Olive Burt standing on Oly — 1921.

The land had to be cleared to pitch a tent, our new home, until a log house was built that summer. We began brushing, and breaking the sod, to establish our homestead.

My brother, Thomas Jr., had filed on the S.E. 30-72-2 W6th. In later years, the family bought Roy Robideaus' grant; N.E. 24-72-3-W6th; north of our home quarter. We leased the adjoining land for the cattle to pasture. In the following years, we finished our elementary education at Lindsay. At home, during this time, Lillian and I were in charge of many chores, such as; milking the cows, raising pigs, tending the chickens, turkeys and geese, haying, etc. With much hard labour, our farm progressed, steadily, through the 1920's and '30's.

Mother cooked, baked, sewed, sold cream, butter and eggs and raised a beautiful big garden of strawberries, raspberries, vegetables, of every variety, as well as beautiful flowers.

From 1921 to 1925, my father, Tom Sr., worked in Grande Prairie as a shoemaker. I recall the weekends, in the summer, that Dad would bicycle twenty-five miles home to spend Sundays with us. Dad was on the school board and was also very active in getting new roads built in our area.

For entertainment, we attended school picnics and dances, as well as the May 24th Sports day at the old Bezanson hall.

In 1935, I married Carl Jensen of Eaglesham. We moved to our homestead, in the Watino district, where we farmed and raised our family of three. Myrtle is now Mrs. Arne Pedersen of Victoria, B.C. Helen is Mrs. Bill Thomson of High Level, Alta., and our only son, Oscar Jensen, lives in Eaglesham, Alta. There are seven grandchildren; Mona, Donna, Anna and Allen Pedersen of Victoria, and Shelly, Connie and Darcy Thomson of High Level, Alta.

My husband is now deceased and I live in Eaglesham.

THE CALLIOU STORY

Around 1884, before the second Riel Rebellion, Michael Calliou, patriarch of the western Calliou clan, father of eighteen children, lived in the Red River Valley. Because he was a peace loving person, he persuaded his large family, married and single to leave their strife torn valley and migrate west with him.

They settled around what is now Stony Plain, to take up their natural mode of life of fishing, hunting, trapping, with some agriculture such as gardening and livestock. The government granted them a large parcel of land which became the Calliou reserve.

Louis Calliou, son of Michael, and his wife, Ann Donald, did not move to the reserve with the rest, but farmed in the Stony Plain and raised their family of eight. They had five sons — Peter, Henry, Louis, Joseph and James, and three daughters — Philomene, Betsy and Louise. The children attended a Mission school of the Oblates.

The North was calling, so Louie hit the trail, working on freight wagons taking supplies to the Hudson Bay Forts. Fur was plentiful so he trapped in winter. He later moved his family to Grouard. He spoke English, French, Cree and Beaver and became an in-

terpreter for the N.W.M. Police, Factors and surveyors. His sons, now young adults, were expert horsemen and helped as guides, drove pack trains, freight wagons and sleighs in the winter and helped homesteaders and ranchers bring their cattle herds over the Trail.

At the turn of the century, Louie saw the 'grande prairie' and moved his family once more. He filed on a quarter east of Bear Creek and began farming. He had brought in the first walking plough and fanning mill.

Soon people, stores, livery stables, were right at his back door, for his land was soon to become the town of Grande Prairie. This place he sold to Mr. Wicker and homesteaded along the banks of the Big Smoky. On the 24-72-3 W6th, he built a two storey squared-log home for his family. The sons filed on homesteads in the community. Louie, and son Henry, cut and hauled logs for the first Presbyterian Church in Grande Prairie (now the Pioneer Museum).

The three daughters were — Philomene — Mrs. St. Pierre Ferguson of Rycroft. She was the mother of seven children. Betsy (Calliou) Belcourt, whose children were Norman and Mary Davis. Widowed, she married Joseph Beattie and had Frank, Bertha and Jose, all now deceased. Louise Ann became Mrs. Bill Fair and had Raymond, Margaret and Bill.

Son Henry married Lucy Testawich and farmed in the Tranquility district. They raised a family of four girls, Julia, Louise, Mary and Virginia, and three sons, Malcolm, Albert and John. Louis Jr. married Peggy Belcourt of Lac St. Ann, and had a son, John, and two daughters, Elizabeth House of Paddle Prairie and Violet of Fort McMurray.

In 1916, Louis Jr. homesteaded the S.E. 23-72-3 W6th and farmed for many years. He later sold out to Paul Podulsky.

Joe Calliou married Maggie L'Hirondell. They farmed at Goodwin.

James Calliou farmed in the Sturgeon Heights area. He married Lucy Grey and had one daughter, Myrtle Renard.

Peter Calliou lived with his parents and took care of them in their last years. He never married.

This fine pioneer spirited family are all deceased, but many descendents still live in the Peace River Country.

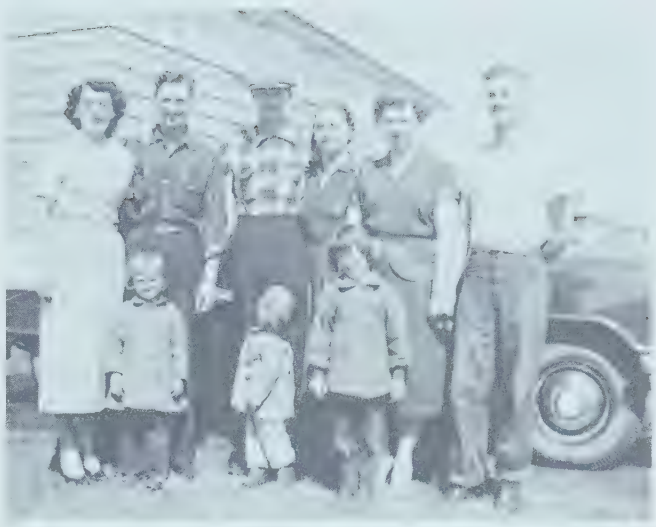
GEORGE W. CAVE (NICHOL)

I, George Cave, after leaving the Nichol homestead in 1928, and working around Grande Prairie, where I met and married Ruby Mitchell of Rio Grande. We were married in Edmonton and returned to a farm east of Grande Prairie in 1930 and like a lot more went broke in the 30's.

We moved around a bit after that but landed back in Grande Prairie where I finally got a steady job with Mr. Wm. Sharpe, who ran the Massey Harris Implements.

Both our daughter, Georgina, and our son, Albert, were born and receiving their schooling in Grande Prairie.

Our daughter married Raymond Sims who was in the army and they were forever on the move. They had four girls, Lynda, Beverly, Margaret and Donna. We had the four grandaughters with us quite often. They are now all married with two children each. Lynda and Donna in Ontario with two boys each and Beverly and Margaret in Victoria with one boy and one girl each, making a total of eight great-grandchildren.



Beverly, Albert, Mr. and Mrs. George Cave, Georgina (Sims) and Roy Sims with Lynda, Beverly and Margaret Sims in front.

Our son Albert joined the navy and he met and married Beverly Burdock of Unity, Sask. They live in Victoria and have a girl, Cheryl, thirteen and a boy, Todd, eleven. (two more grandchildren, total of six).

We moved from Grande Prairie to Victoria in 1959. I worked for Bafso Paints in the factory till I retired in 1973.

JOHN (JOCK) AND JUNE CONEY AND FAMILY

Jock, age 4 years, immigrated from Scotland with his parents, James and Mary Anne Coney, in 1928. He attended school at Fitzsimmons from Grades 1 to 9.

At the age of 18 years, he joined the army and went overseas on June 10th, 1943. He served with the Loyal Edmonton Reg. in Italy, France and Holland, and was discharged on June 30, 1946.

Jock returned to Bezanson, where he worked in different bush camps. Nortons Mill, Moons and the Dorscheid mills were some of them. During the fifties, he drove trucks for Henry Ford. He was also employed by the Government, as ferryman at Watino.

In 1947, Jock met June Lucus, who, at this time, was employed, as a nursing aid, in the Grande Prairie hospital. June is from a Historical family of Wetaskiwin, Alberta. Her Grandparents, Frank and Margaret, in 1884, came to live at the Peace Hill Agency Farm, later known as Supply Farm No. 18. Fort Ethier was on their land. This was the stopping place for the North West Mounted Police, stagecoach passengers and the early settlers. Grandma Lucus was the first white woman in this area.

June recalls, "When we were kids, we use to play in the old fort. It is still in very good condition and children still play there today."

June's mother, Mrs. Daisy Lucus, was the first white child born in Dayland, Alberta. She worked for about twelve years, compiling data, collecting pic-

tures, etc. on the history of this area, which she published in her book named, "Siding 16".

Mrs. June Coney received her education in Wetaskiwin, Millet and Entwistle. She trained, and graduated, as a qualified nursing aid, at the Mental Hospital in Ponoka. After three years of employment there, June came to the Grande Prairie hospital to work for a year.

Jock and June were married, on their birthdays, on June 10, 1948. They celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary in 1974.

Jock and June have six children: Cortez was born on July 7, 1949. He married Erna Backton on June 28, 1975. They live in Moose Jaw, Sask. and have one son, Ian James. Christine was born on December 21, 1950. She married Ronald Thorpe, of Debolt, on Aug. 28, 1969. They live in Whitecourt, and have one girl, Margo Ruth. Lorie was born on July 20, 1952. She is working in the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in Edmonton. Kelsey was born on February 20, 1954. He is married to Rose Benson. They live in Grande Prairie and have one son, Dennis John Hugh. Larry was born on May 23, 1955. He is a graduate of the Sexsmith high school and the Peace River Bible school. Vicky was born on April 18, 1957. She lives in Grande Prairie and works at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. She has a daughter, Bobby Jo.

Jock and June still live in Bezanson and it is a great time for Grandpa and Grandma Coney when all the family come home.

JACK CONNELL

John Robert (Jack) Connell, was born in Peterborough, Ontario, about the year 1882. The family later moved to Bobcaygeon, Ontario, where he grew up, and learned the blacksmith trade, from his father.

Prior to 1920, he moved to southern Alberta, and joined his twin brothers; Tom and David. They farmed there for some time, but it was too windy to suit them. So, they decided to move to the Peace River Country, about 1920. Jack moved to Bezanson, and homesteaded the N.E. 2-73-3 W6th, in 1922. Later, he bought the N.E. 36-72-3 W6th, known as the 'Raison' quarter. He farmed this land until about 1925. A move was then made to Grande Prairie, where he worked as a blacksmith for Bob Barley.

In the fall of 1927, he bought a lot from Bob, and built his own shop. A lathe and an acetylene welding outfit were also purchased from Bob Barley, and he set up his own welding and machine shop. Jack had Cliff Fee build an electric welder, and, to our knowledge, it was the first electric welder in Grande Prairie, at that time.

In 1937, Jack married Grace Moody. In 1938, the depression was on and business was poor, so they decided to move back to Bezanson, and set up a blacksmith, welding and machine shop. To the residents of the district of Bezanson, it was a welcome move.

He was a big-hearted, good-natured man, and was liked and respected by all. He was a lover of horses and was a wonderful horseman.

T. L. McEwen bought out his business, in about 1948. He moved to his farm and lived in semi-retirement for the remainder of his days.

CLIFTON CONNERY

Clifton Connery homesteaded S.W. 27-72-3 W6th. This land was later owned by Nick Kochalyk.

HENRY CONNERY

Henry was a veteran of World War I, and homesteaded the S.W. 28-72-3 W6th. This land was later bought by Bob Fenton. Harry Beaver then owned it until he sold it to Donald and Rose Ames.

Henry also filed on S.W. 23-72-3 W6th, which was later farmed by Fords. It then became the farm of Russel and Joan Ames.

ARTHUR AND ELIZABETH CUMBERWORTH — by Mrs. Ada Flood

In the spring of 1918, Arthur Cumberworth came to Grande Prairie and filed on a homestead in the Bezanson District, S.W. 21-72-3 W6th, now the D. Ames farm. He worked for Bill Grant at Lake Saskatoon until the fall, then went back to Vancouver for the winter.

The following spring of 1919, he moved, by train, his family, wife Elizabeth and three daughters, Ada, Irene and Mable and his few household effects, to the Peace country. They came to the immigration hall in Grande Prairie, and from there a Mr. Severson brought them with his team and wagon, out to his home at Bezanson.



Jack Connell at work in the 1940's.



Left to right: Mrs. Cumberworth, Ada, Irene, Mabel and Mr. Cumberworth.

There were lots of deep holes and mud on the road out. When they were coming through the red willow slough, the water came into the wagon box.

After staying all night at the Severson home, they moved into the Tom Smith house for a temporary place to stay, while they built a log house on their own quarter.

They planted their first garden in a fire guard ploughed around the house. For their first winter, they built a pole shed with a roof of hay, and kept a cow and some chickens in it.

Arthur went out to work again for Bill Grant and also Dave Axon, who lived east of Grande Prairie.

The first breaking was done for the homestead rights by Ed Nichol who also hauled home the lumber for the house. They also built a log barn. Rowe Thompson, who was our neighbor to the west of us, hauled the logs.

In 1920, he purchased a team of oxen, (their names were Blue and Nig), and a walking plough, with which he broke up the prairie sod.

Ada started to East Kleskun school. Mrs. Dorothy Leslie, then boarding at the Ed Whalen home, was her first teacher. Later she was taught by Mrs. Jim Storm.

Some of the neighbors living there at that time were Roy Ames, to the east, Henry Dumas, north and Jack Maloy, south. (We purchased this quarter later, to make up the half section). Other neighbors were, Ed Nichols, George Cave, Harry Card, Jack Hunter, "Humphie" Currie, Paddy Gallagher, Bill Ford, Tom Burt, Wm. Moody, Jack McEachern and Mr. and Mrs. Fields.

Their post office was at Pat Rooney's store, which, at that, was located on the Pat Rooney homestead. Later it was moved to its present site in the Bezanson village.

Arthur farmed there until 1941. He then retired and went to live in Abbotsford, B.C.

His youngest daughter, Mable, and her husband, Harry Beaver, farmed there until 1952, when they sold to Donald Ames.

FRANK AND MARY DUMAS AND FAMILY

Francis Robert (Frank) Dumas was born on January 29, 1886, in New Richmond, Quebec, where he grew up with his six sisters and five brothers. Two of the fourteen children died while still infants.

Frank took over the family farm after the death of his father. He married Mary Malvina Cormier, (who was born on October 14, 1909, in New Richmond, Quebec,) on February 2, 1926. That April, they sold the farm and came west to settle on his brother John's homestead, north of Bezanson. The description of this quarter is N.W. 22-72-3 W6th. Here they farmed and raised nine of their family of ten.

The children went a little over 1½ miles to attend school, at Lindsay.

The last information received on the family in, about 1974, is as follows: Joseph Conrad was born on November 3, 1928, and resides and works in Prince Rupert. Teresa Francis Rita, was born on October 28, 1929, and married William McLaughlan of Ottawa, Ont., on January 4, 1949, in Edmonton. They live in Cowichan Station, B.C. John Edward was born on February 12, 1932, and lives in Burnaby, B.C. He never married. Lena Marie, who was born on March 14, 1934, married Gordon H. Ablett. They live in Steveston, B.C. Beatrice Ann Laurina was born on February 10, 1936, at Bezanson. On May 24, 1956, she married Lorne C. Anderson from Prince Rupert. They live in Cowichan Bay, B.C. Patrick Robert, born on January 19, 1938, lost his first wife, Judy, in a car accident. He remarried and lives in Prince George, B.C. Elizabeth Jeanine, born in September, 1940, is married to John Fasty and lives in Terrace, B.C. Marguarite Stella, born September 30, 1940, married Stewart Stirton. This marriage failed. Later, she married David Owen. They are living in White Horse, Y.T. Bernadette Cecelia Sheila was born on March 30, 1949. She married Thomas Godwin and the family live in White Horse, Y.T.

Mr. and Mrs. Dumas worked very hard on the farm and, to supplement the farm income, Frank worked at lumber mills during most winters.

They sold the farm in 1951, and moved to Prince Rupert to work and live. The children continued their education there.

Steven Daryll was born on April 3, 1952, and married Mary Watt on November 24, 1973, at White Horse.

Frank passed away, in Prince Rupert, on April 10, 1973. Mrs. Dumas is now living in White Horse, Y.T.

Bob Cormier, brother of Mrs. Dumas, came to Bezanson, with his family, to farm on N.E. 33-72-3 W6th, in the late twenties.

HENRY DUMAS

Henry Dumas, a six foot, 200 lb. man, seventh of a family of fourteen, was born on March 7, 1894, on a small farm in New Richmond, Quebec. Here, the six girls and six boys grew up and all, with the exception of a sister who married and lived in Montreal, moved out west.

There were very few job opportunities in New Richmond. Henry, at the age of 12, got his first job in a lath mill, in Camelton, New Brunswick. At thirteen years of age, he spent the next 13 months in a bush camp, where he did straight axe work. The crosscut saws came later for cutting timber and many bush men refused to use them at first.

The Murphy and Gallager blood on the mother's side, combined with French blood on the father's side, made the Dumas clan, the rugged, tough family that they were. Brother Steve, six foot and three inches tall and weighing in at three hundred pounds, changed his name to Murphy, when he became a professional wrestler. Henry did some boxing as a light heavyweight in his youth and while he was in the army.

Henry came west and became employed in Edmonton, in 1912. He drove a coal delivery outfit for some time. Years later, he met Dan Minchin and through conversation, was surprised to learn that Dan remembered shoeing the dray team that Henry had driven.

From Edmonton, Henry and his cousin, Paddy Gallager, went to work on the Grand Trunk Railroad between Edson and Prince George, but left this work for the better-paying job of scow freighting up and



Henry, on the right, and Steve Dumas.

down the Fraser river in B.C. Life on the Fraser was precarious, many lives were lost, but Henry felt right at home there.

He and Paddy, returned to work at logging for Peter McPhee, Bob's father, at Leman in the Wolf Creek area. While here, Henry met Harry Card, who was later to become his neighbor in the Bezanson area. Many other people, he met in his travels, later ended up in the Grande Prairie region; Baldy Red, McNamara and the Edgar brothers were a few.

He worked for Bob and Nan Murray and built their poolhall at Mirror Landing, before coming to Grande Prairie to build the Murray Hotel.

In 1914, Henry and Steve Dumas and McNamara went to Grouard, under the impression that the railroad would soon reach this place. When they learned this was a false report, they took off for McLennan, where these three men built the first buildings, other than a small police barracks. A large rooming house and a poolhall, etc. they constructed, but later, sold to a developer by the name of Giroux. Then Henry and Paddy contracted the job of installing culverts in a stretch of road through, what is now, Wanham. They were going to file on homesteads, until they were told that it froze every month of the year in this area, which scared them out of this plan.

Paddy took time off work to hit to Grande Prairie to file on quarters for each of them in the East Kleskun district. When Henry caught sight of his quarter, he was alarmed, for it was nearly all under water. He told Paddy that he had wanted to farm, not trap muskrats. This deal was not for him.

In May, 1915, Henry and Paddy, now at Prudence Crossing, found themselves at a bash in Frank Ambert's place, where someone was buying all the drinks. The next day, they discovered they had joined the Army. The service wanted Henry to take up his boxing again. But, he wanted to see France and see France he did; he spent 23 months in the trenches, where he received several minor wounds.

He spent thirty days at Etaps, in an Australian hospital, run by the Orangemen, where it was almost a scandal for a Catholic French-Canadian to be.

Sergeant Henry Dumas survived the war and returned to Bezanson, in 1919, to take out a homestead and a soldiers grant on the N½ of 21-72-3 W6th, where it would be quiet and peaceful. Here, he farmed in summer, and amused or thrilled his young visitors with his exciting, colorful yarns. Henry spent most winters logging in bush camps. He helped build the Fitzpatrick sawmill, and logged for the McLaughlin mill on the Wapiti river, too.

In 1949, Henry sold his farm to Steve Garrett and became camp foreman for the Fort St. John Lumber Co., until 1953. For the next 7 or 8 years, he worked for Hystads, and retired to Valemont, B.C., when he figured his career of camp foreman had ended. He was called back, for he was still needed for a few more years.

In 1964, Henry bought a house in Grande Prairie, where he went into a well-deserved, retirement, with the company of his old cat, to enjoy good health and many good friends.

DUPUY STORY

PARENTS: George and Emma Dupuy

George and Emma Dupuy left their native land, France, in 1913; their destination, St. Albert, Alberta. They had four children: Madeline, George, Odette and Robert. Later two more children were born, named Moise and Suzanne.

In 1920, the family moved to take up homesteading in the Bezanson district, four miles north of the Bezanson store. A temporary shelter was set up, while a log house was being built before winter set in. A big wood heater, and wood stove, were used to keep us comfortable all winter. A coal oil lamp would give us light. We had a good well for drinking water. We had our own meat, not to forget the wild rabbit which was on our menu many times. We had fresh vegetables from our garden, also our own milk, butter and eggs.

All the farming was done by horses. The little bit of grain we had was hauled, by wagon, to Clairmont, 25 miles away. Later on, our parents started a fox farm.

The children attended the Lindsay School, thus we walked the three miles many times. In winter we used a cutter and horses. For entertainment, they had school dances, pie and basket socials, and house par-

ties. The music was usually supplied by Tom Rice and Ernie Ford.

In 1925, we left Bezanson and took up farming in Falher. We went on farming and the children went to school, etc.

In 1934, Mother passed away, followed by Father in 1970.

A new era has begun for the second generation.

Madeline: (deceased) married Phil Lacoursiere, now living in the Senior Citizen's Home in Falher and had four children. Paul (deceased) married and had two children; Pauline (Therrien) married and had five children; Jeannine (Pigeon) married and had five children. Emile married, no children.

George: (deceased) married Laurence Etheir and had three children, Allen, Vivian and Gary.

Odette: married Ken Merchant, still living on a farm in Falher and they have three children; Camilla, married to Sgt. Doyle, living in Ottawa; Frances married to Cpl. Lorne Nelson living in Brooks, Alberta, have two children, Dean and Tracy; Cliff, not married living in Westlock.

Suzanne: (deceased) married Armidose Fortier and they had seven children, all living in many different parts of Alberta.

Robert: the second boy, who was only 6 months old when they came from France, homesteaded five miles from the parents place and farmed there until 1965. He then sold his farm to his brother, Moise, and moved to Kelowna, B.C. where he resided for 2 years. He then returned to the Peace River country and settled in High Prairie, where he is living at present. He never married.

Moise: In 1942, the youngest boy was in the Army in Grande Prairie, was transferred to Vancouver, then on to Halifax, and back to Vancouver. While in the Army he married Elsa DeBaere, also from the Falher area. Moise was discharged from the army in 1945. He then settled on a homestead close to Robert's and purchased more land through the V.L.A. He also bought Robert's three quarter sections when he sold out, in 1965.

Moise and Elsa raised five children, Dianne, Denis, Leona, Joyce and Norman. They then sold the farmland and are now residing in Falher.

Dianne married Jim Gagnon. They resided in Edmonton for three years, then came back to Falher where Jim is now employed as manager of a large farm. They have 2 children, Carol and David, both attending school at Guy.

Denis attended S.A.I.T. then worked as a weed inspector, for two years, in the Valleyview area. He then was employed, in Peace River, with the Assessment Branch, where he is at present. He married Verna Raymond and they have one little boy named Dwayne. They are now living on a farm 10 miles north of Peace River, where he is grain farming.

Leona, married Randy Aubin. They resided in the Falher area for awhile, then moved to Edmonton. They are now living on a farm, 1 mile from Leduc, where Randy is taking care of a registered cattle farm. They have 2 girls, Lynnan and Beverly. Lynnan is attending school in Leduc.

Joyce graduated in 1975, and is now attending N.A.I.T., where she is taking a secretarial course. She is planning a trip to Europe this summer (1976).

Norman, the baby, was born 12½ years after Joyce, and is now in grade one in Falher.

JIM AND BEA FELLS AND FAMILY

Jim Fells emigrated from England, to Canada, in 1921. He came west, to Manitoba, to work. Later, he was employed in Ontario, until 1928, when he came to Grande Prairie. For a few years, Jim worked on farms in the Lindsay district. It was during this period that he joined the Lindsay Dramatic Club and took parts in some great two-hour plays. This group raised funds for school sports equipment, for the Lindsay school.

Jim homesteaded in the Fitzsimmons district, and in 1936, he married Bea Robideau. The young couple worked hard to prove up their land. During the winter months, Jim cut, load after load, of poplar wood on his farm. This wood, he sold to local farmers, for $2.00 a trip, and all you could pile on a sleigh with wide bunks and high stakes. After seven years, Bea and Jim bought the Jack Stafford place and moved to Bezanson to farm.

In the winter of 1946, Jim went north to the Liard River area, to help Tom Mould with his trapline. One January evening, Jim had a hair-raising experience. A grizzly came to his cabin. While the bear smashed out the cabin windows to gain entry, Jim, with sleeping bag and .22 rifle, crawled up into the attic. Under the bear's weight, the cabin door gave way. He devoured all the food supplies, then proceeded to wreck everything in the cabin. Jim spent the night in the attic. The following afternoon, two men heard his calls for help. When he explained how the huge bear refused to leave the cabin, the men returned to their truck and brought back a .30-.30 rifle. While Jim peppered away with the .22, the men killed the animal, as it started through a window.

Jim, for the next 25 years, was employed as a cook for oil rig crews. His work took him as far north as Tooley, Resolute Bay. The North West Territories, and over many parts of Alberta and B.C. During these years, Beatrice held the fort at home. She had the big



Jim Fells in camp kitchen.



Jim and Bea Fells with Larry, Bernice, Peggy and MaryLou.

responsibility of raising the family and keeping a home going. Being of good pioneer stock, she managed very well. She has been active in community events, and always ready to lend a hand at wedding receptions, showers, etc. Her favorite sport is curling, which she is good at.

Jim and Bea are retired and live on their farm on the crest of the Smoky banks. Their home is nestled in a very scenic part of the district. They are still helping in the activities of our community and enjoying friends and family.

They have four children. Larry is married to Bev Miller. They have two sons; Glen and Roddy. Bernice Welander is the mother of Sandy, Jody, Lorna and Tairie. Peggy Ross is the mother of Jim, Berk and Tracey. Mary-Lou Podulsky has two children; Ronny and Lisa. Granddaughter Sandy and Jim Bradley have two children; Jason and Carlee, who are Jim and Bea's great-grandchildren.

FRANK FLANNERY

Frank served in World War I, and after his discharge, came to the Bezanson area. He filed on the W½ of 28-72-3 W6th, in 1918. He was a quiet, well-educated, Irish lad. Many remember his bright red hair and freckles.

In 1924-25, he was elected councillor for a one-year term in office.

After homesteading for eight or nine years, he returned to Winnipeg, Manitoba. His half section was, later, bought by Haviland Bulford and is now owned by Gordon and Betty Wathen.

THE FORDS

A long time ago, when the earth was green, a sprout from the Ford family tree, which grew near Aberdine, Scotland, became restless and came to root somewhere in Canada. One branch found its way to Fergus, Ont., where he settled and raised a family.

Son, William, married red-haired Kathern McQuarrie, and came further west to settle on a farm at Brookdale, near Brandon, Manitoba, where they raised their family of nine.

On November 30, 1910, William Jr. married Vera Ames and they began a life together on their farm in the same district. A year later, they lost their first born, a baby girl, who died at birth.

Life goes on, as we all learn. Harold was born December, 1912, followed by Fred, 1914, and Charlie, 1915. Then, again, the tree became restless and in 1916, Will and Ern, came to take out homesteads in the land of promise, the Peace River Country. Will filed on the old home quarter, the S.W. 18-72-3 W6th.

World War one was raging; Ern went off to war, and Will went back to his farm and family.

Evelyn came next, January, 1918, followed by Ross, April 1919, then Vernon, September, 1920. Ern had come home, from war, with a leg wound and then gone back to the business of homesteading. By then, Jack Hunter returned to claim his quarter, so Will filed on the S.W. 36-72-3 W6th, and on another quarter across the Smoky.

In 1920, Will sold his farm in Manitoba, and brought his family from their cosey little, home, to their new home in the bush; wagon-roads, mud, mosquitoes, and a lot of back-breaking work. Their new life began in an unfinished home, with bare board walls and floor and a ladder on the wall to climb into the dark attic to sleep: a horrible place, until a dormer window was built in. Vera settled in, with the help of Wills' sister, Lil. They were baking bread, cakes and pies for the saw mill that Ern, Charlie and George, were operating at the time. George Ames was camp cook.

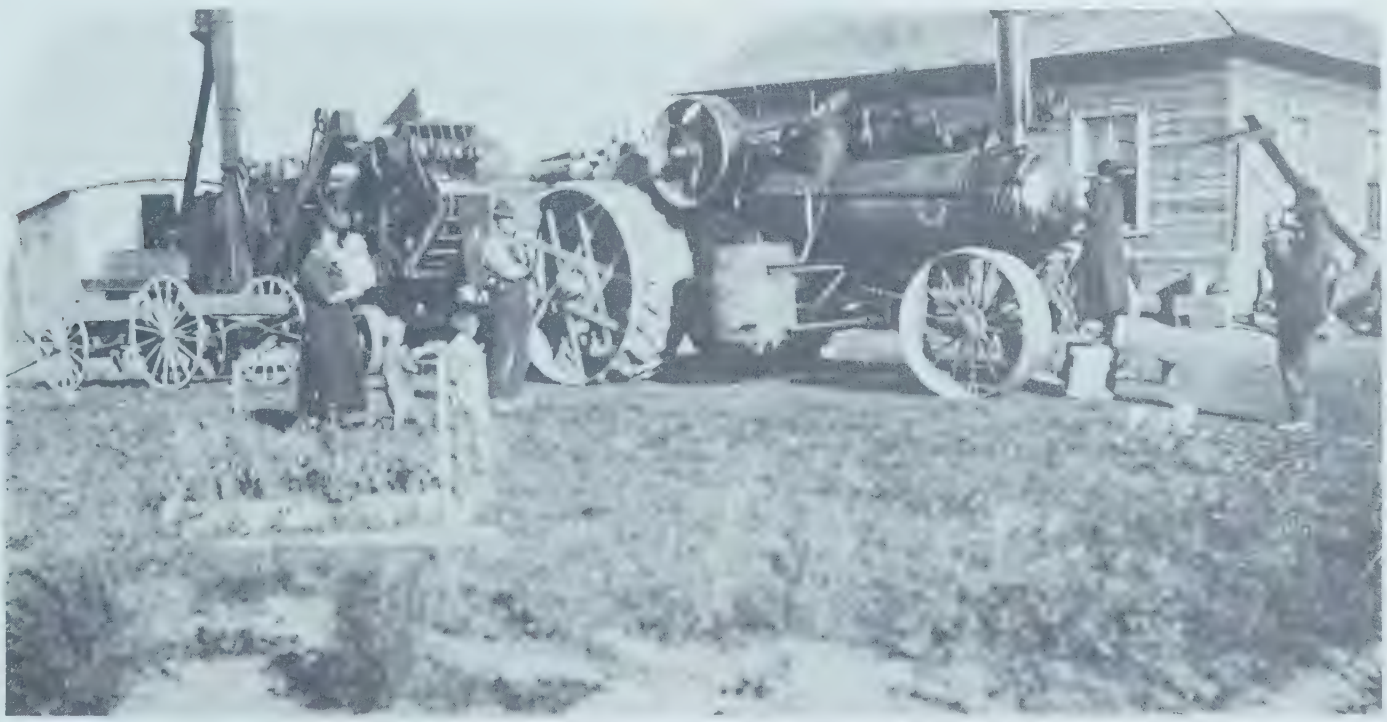
The years began to pass, filled with the work of clearing brush, breaking the land the never-ending roots to be pulled out. There were crews of men around to seed the grain, cut and stook. Then came the threshing gang; the big cumbersome steam engine, running the just as big and cumbersome 'Red River Special' threshing machine, followed by a cook car. One memorable fall, they threshed for forty days without a break. Some farms were so tiny, that the whole crop, wheat, oats and barley, was no more than one round for the eight stook wagons. So, more time was spent creeping from one farm to another, than in threshing.

Will and Veras' family grew, and grew up. Next came Myrtle, in 1922, with Mrs. Cumberworth as midwife. Vera never thought of hospitals or doctors, unless a real crisis arose. Next, was Harvey, in 1924, with Thelma Ames assisting, followed by Elsie in 1925. We are not sure who stood by with her.

The family was all doctored at home with goose grease and turpentine, a good rub-down for colds, along with a mustard plaster, if needed. Earache was treated with eclectric oil warmed in a spoon over the old coal oil lamp and a bag with warm salt to lay your ear on. If croup was the problem, you got a teaspoon full of wood ashes, brown sugar and butter, all mixed into a paste. Your hollow tooth got a piece of cotton batting soaked in vanilla or peppermint, to stop the ache. If you stepped on a nail, or cut your foot, which often happened as the kids ran barefoot all summer, there was a chunk of fat, salt pork tied on the wound. Later, they heard that the big slough-leaves made a



Front row, left to right: Vernon, Ellen, Mrs. and Mr. Bill Ford, Janet, Verna, and Ross. Back row: Harvey, Myrtle, Charlie, Evelyn, Harold, John, Henry, Fred and Elsie Ford.



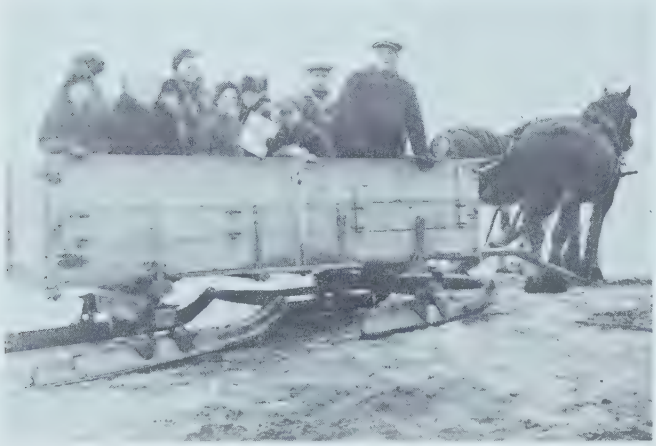
Bill Ford's house with Ford and Ames' separator, steamer and 'Mobile hotel'.

better poultice. Vera nursed her brood through diphtheria, scarlet fever, chickenpox and measles, without the aid of a doctor. Not until Myrtle developed mastoid and needed surgery, and Vernon was hospitalized with double pneumonia, was a doctor needed.

Itch would go around the school once in a while. When this happened, sulphur and lard was mixed and smeared on, in generous amounts. One morning, Ross, Vern and Harvey, were sneaking a cigarette in bed. When they struck the match under the blankets, the flash of flame from the sulphur on their bodies, gave them a singeing they never forgot. Once in a while, there had to be a raid on bedbugs or head lice. Then the coal oil came in to use as a head rub. The mattresses were wiped with a coal oil dipped cloth, and the bed legs stood in little cans with enough coal oil to stop any bed bugs that tried to escape.

One afternoon, 'Plushbottom', as we all called Bert Henderson, and Henry Tisdale, two bachelors from Debolt, stopped by the Ford home. They looked the kids over, and were amazed that there wasn't a Henry Ford yet. Vera promised that if the next one was a boy, he would be Henry. So, it was 'Henry', who was born March 2, 1927. Mrs. Elmer Moody assisted. Ellen was born in 1928. Thelma and Mrs. Norton were the midwives. Then came John in 1930, keeping Mrs. Moody busy, and Verna in 1932, and Janet, in 1934, with Aunt Edna Ames giving a hand.

There were several bachelors who were a special delight to the Ford family. Henry Tisdal, who loved to tell stories, repeated the one of the 'Preacher feeding the calf', over and over. Tom Newton, the Watkins man who traveled the countryside in his horse-drawn yellow, covered wagon, spent dozens of weekends with the Fords. He had known them in Manitoba, where he farmed before coming to the Peace country in 1925. He often spoke of the young lad, Sammy, they raised, and who went to the U.S.A. to become the actor, Glenn Ford. It was always a little embarrassing to the kids, when Tom would greet them with "Hello! how's your liver", as they were never quite sure how their liver was! When his cases were opened Monday morning, Vera chose her spices and flavorings, then got a can of baby powder as a gift. The kids got some gum or candy, and were warned not to eat too much or it would rust their stomach. There was Bill Hall with his camera and radio; the first in the district. But Jack Hunter was special. He was the favorite babysitter when Will, Vera, the older boys and Evelyn, went dancing at the Bezanson hall. (Ern and Hazel Ford, Peter Ramsey and Mrs. Johnson, supplied the music). Jack made life exciting for all the kids in the neighborhood. If teased a little, he would give them a good chase. If caught, they got a dry shave on the back of the neck with his tough boney thumbs, or a swat that made them run a little faster next time.



Fords first 'school bus' to the Lindsay school.

Wash water, for the mountains of clothes for the family, was heated, to scalding, on the cook stove, then pailed into the washer along with a generous amount of homemade soap. If all went well, with the wooden handwasher for the first few years, then the gas run washer in later years, the washing would be all hung out on clothes lines by supper time. They could dry in the summer, if it didn't rain, or in the winter, freeze solid. They were brought in and dried as room was made, on lines strung wherever they could be strung. Then came the job of ironing, with the old sad irons, the tub of overalls and shirts, and another tub of dampened, starched cotton dresses, aprons and slips. Vera always had a girl, from the neighborhood, in to help with the housework. Some of the girls were: Ada Cumberworth, Edna Delaney, Minny Nelson, Blanch Moody, Thelma Robideau and many others.

The kids remember Hattie Robideau, and the very efficient way she rode herd on the crew, when Will and Vera, with baby Ellen, went back to Manitoba, when Will's mother died. Vera didn't believe in people wasting precious time, so the girls were allowed to sit and listen to the soap operas: — Maw Perkins, Pepper Young's Family and Myrt and Marg, undisturbed, if they would darn socks. Vera always had a sewing machine to mend, patch and turn flannelette blankets, when they grew thin in the middle.

Summers were spent weeding the big garden and potato patch, and filling the cellar, under the house, with fruit and pickles. Oh! the saskatoons that were picked and canned; no-one can look at a canned saskatoon yet! One summer Will promised his brood a little wagon if they picked 100 quarts of wild strawberries, not thinking he'd ever have to deliver. But, they did pick the 100 quarts, so Eaton's catalogue was got out, the wagon was chosen and the order was sent. The big day came for the wagon to arrive; but what should be unloaded, by the mailman, but a stupid lawn swing. The disappointment! A letter was written, to the Eaton Co., of the mistake; an answering letter came back from Eaton's. If they would keep the swing, they could have it really cheap and the wagon would be shipped as ordered. It took the rest of the summer to get the wagon, but it did finally arrive. The swing, on the shady side of the house, was also enjoyed by young and old on the hot summer days.

Will used to say, it took 100 pounds of flour a week, and 100 pounds of sugar a month, along with hundreds of pounds of potatoes, beef, pork, deer and moose, each year, to feed the hungry bunch.

Will and Vera were never ones to fuss about birthdays, anniversaries or Thanksgiving; but Christmas was everything rolled into one. First, the house

was cleaned and polished from top to bottom. There was a tree, a gift for each of the kids, cigars and spirits for the men, and candy, nuts and oranges, on Christmas morning. Then the house was filled to bursting with friends and relations, to help eat the pies, cake, cookies, chicken, turkey and a goose or two.

There were really only two special days in the year, for the kids; Christmas and the 24th of May picnic at the old Bezanson hall. The rest were what you made them.

The kids were sent to Lindsay school, three miles distant, by team and democrat, a two seated buggy. When it was no longer big enough, a team and wagon hauled them. For years, there were: six Rooney's, six Fords, two or three from George Ames, sometimes the Fred Ames kids, Robert and Donald Ames, who cut across country and caught the gang at 'Macks', one mile north of the store, and sometimes the Nortons met them at Rooneys. School could hardly get under way until the Ford wagon arrived! The Ford kids were a shy, noisy bunch, who were allowed to play their games inside or out. Sliding down the stairs on an old bear robe 'till it wore out, was one of them. One day, Elsie was showing Glenn Ames, how close she could ride his tricycle along the top of the stairs, forgetting that the back part of the tricycle was wider. Yes, over she went, down the stairs, the tryke on top. Nothing was hurt, but her pride.

Vera made a practice of letting the kids settle their differences anyway they chose, but with four strong rules; — no weapons, biting, spitting or swearing. If one broke the rule, he or she got a good sound slapping from mother, which meant he or she lost that round!

Oh! the good times that were had with friends and neighbors, singing and dancing; the wrestling and nonsense made the work and hardships fun. Even getting tangled in fly coils hanging from the ceiling, seemed like fun and games.

The music that Ern, Harold, John, Henry, Harvey and Ross played will never be forgotten.

The family began breaking up in 1936, when Harold, and Julia Brown, were married. By 1944, when Will died after a long illness; Charlie was married to Billie Ulmer, Evelyn to Jim Cochrane, Myrtle to Bob Thorpe, Fred to Betty Love, and Vernon; who was in the army; to Pat Brown. Ross was in the airforce. So, these had all left the nest. Vera died suddenly, in October of 1953. By this time, Harvey was marrried to Arlene Lenis, Ross to Noreen O'Connell, Ellen to Bohden Hawryluk, Verna to Gordon Crowe, John to Joyce Hart and Janet to Johnnie Sitsma. Myrtle was divorced and remarried to Earl McLaughlin. Elsie left that fall to make her home in New Brunswick, where she married Eric Wade in 1955. Henry married Shirley McArther, that same year, making their home on the old home place.

CHARLIE AND BILLIE FORD

Charlie was born in Brookdale, Manitoba, and came to the Bezanson district with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Ford, in 1921. He obtained his education at the Lindsay school. Even in his younger days, Charlie's interest in mechanics was obvious.

Alma Ulmer, better known as "Billie', came to Bezanson from Castor, Alberta, in 1937. She boarded at the Jack Mitchells' and taught in the old Bezanson school.

Oscar Albinati had just finished building a barn and was having a barn dance to celebrate the event. It was at this dance that Charlie and Billie met. They were married the following year.

They lived in Grande Prairie, where Charlie worked for Massey Harris. In 1951, they moved to Castor, Alberta, and from there to West Langley, B.C. But the call of the Peace was too strong, and they moved back, in 1962, to settle in the Bezanson district. Billie taught at Bezanson for four years, then went in to teach at Harry Balfour School. Charlie worked for CCIL for one year, then went to work for Park Bros., as a heavy duty mechanic. He worked there until 1968, then went to work for Pardee Equipment. He passed away on Oct. 25, 1970.

Charlie and Billie had eight children — Marilyn, Mervyn, Dwight and Charlene were born in Grande Prairie; Beverly, Karen and the twins, Wanda and Wendy, were born at Castor. Wendy lived only four days.

Marilyn and Merle Baird and their four children live in Swan Hills. Beverly and Bill Kunne and their three children live in Grande Prairie. Mervyn and Dorothy live in Penticton, B.C. Dwight lives at High Prairie. Charlene and Eric Pettit live in Edmonton. Wanda and Wayne and their son live in Grande Prairie, Karen and Brian Coogan and their two children, also, live in Grande Prairie.

ELSIE KAMILA (FORD)

Elsie left the nest and went to work in the Grande Prairie, boarding with Charlie and Billie.

Later, she cooked for the bridge crew while they were building the Smoky bridge. Then, she bought the 'Way Inn', located at the east end of bridge; a good little business, but not as busy as it was when the ferry was running. Life was going well, when on June 5, 1953, the cafe burned to the ground. She did plan on rebuilding, but as the cafe had not been built in the proper location, she would have had to move.

After her mother died, her interest was gone. So, Elsie bought a mobile home, hooked it on to her car, and left for eastern Canada.

She settled in New Brunswick, where she married Eric Wade, in 1955. They made their home in the east until the summer of 1966, when they moved back to Grande Prairie with their two little girls, Tracey and Trudy.

Eric worked in the Royalite service station, for John Ford and Herb Steeves, until December when the Hullrich and Bradsby Co., in Wallaceburg, Ont., offered him a job making golf clubs in their sports equipment factory; something Eric was trained for and loved doing.

They moved to Wallaceburg, where they lived until Eric's retirement. Then, they bought a mobile home at Missassauga Beach, where they lived until Eric's death, in February, 1975.

Elsie has remarried, and is now living, with her husband, Doug Kamila and the two girls, in Fernie, B.C.

FRED AND BETTY FORD

Fred grew up helping to milk the stable of Holstein cows and cleaning barns, along with all the other farm chores of the time; but his real love was the horses.

Morris Stewart must still remember how proud Fred was the day he could manipulate the ribbons of the six or eight horses as they headed to the field to plough. Fred was never happier than when he was driving a team, decked with bells, getting a load of firewood or just joyriding in the cutter.

As the years passed, the tractors took over more and more of the field work, since they put in many more hours than horses could. Hence, the boys took jobs away from the farm.

Fred was driving the Maple Leaf fuel truck, for W. B. Clark, when he and Betty Love were married in May, 1944. They bought Joe Lowe's house and moved it to its present location west of the Bezanson store.

Fred went into the trucking business, and did custom hauling from near and far. He always had someone's little kid in tow, as next to horses he loved little kids (and the girls). Ann was born on January 3, 1948, and it was a common sight to see Fred and Bill Hall hauling grain with baby Ann in their arms. If love makes one grow, Ann should be ten feet tall.

Betty was kept busy with meals, at all hours, and working in the Bezanson post office, as well as running the Co-op store for a time.

Many years were spent trucking gravel for the Dept. of Highways. Betty and Ann, living in a holiday trailer, went along during school holidays.

As Fred grew older, he left the trucking to Henry, and devoted more time to farming.

Time passed; Ann grew up, an only child, finished high school and was working in the Bank of Commerce, when she married John (Mack) Miller, in January of 1966. He was a lad from Beaverlodge, who was working on the oil rigs. They are now living in Leduc, with their two girls, Laurie, 8 on Nov. 5, 1976; and Jackie 4, in March of 1977.

After Ann was married, Betty took a job in the Grande Prairie Co-op, where she is still employed part-time. Since Fred and Henry sold some of the old farm, Fred has been semi-retired. He gives Henry, or neighbors, a hand when it is needed, or works at various jobs in the winter months.

JULIA AND HAROLD FORD — by Julia Sieben

My father and mother, George and Lucy Brown, moved to the Bezanson area in the spring of 1929, from the Morinville district. With them, they brought their ten children; Violet, Julia, John, Gertrude, Rachel, Donald, Patrick and Patricia (twins), Lloyd and Doreen. My father had rented this farm through the Public Administer in Edmonton, without having first seen it. They were assured of good farm buildings. Everything we owned was shipped north by railroad to Clairmont. Father, and four children, came on ahead as the smaller ones had measles at the time. Mother, Violet, the four youngest and I, came three weeks later. The place was known as the 'Kieblo Place', some two miles west of Bezanson. My first impression of the place was one of horror. It was an old log cabin with sod roof, only large enough for a couple, and two



Harold and Julia Ford in front of their store.

children. But for a couple and ten children?! However, we managed some how. When it began to rain, we spent hours with pans and mops. I vowed I'd never stay in that country!

My father then rented a place on the east side of Kleskun Hill. By the beginning of July, we were moved up there. There was a nice frame house here, which gave us all a lift. However, we were soon to discover another plague; bed-bugs! By this time, hay-making was on, so we slept in the hayloft until the house was fumigated. We survived, and really enjoyed our life on the hills.

We went to the Somme school at first; my last year in school! Later, the children attended the East Kleskun school.

I was just past fifteen when I began helping out at harvest time. The next year, at sixteen, I began to



Ford's Orchestra — Harold Ford, Paddy Brown, John Ford and Fuzz (Vern) LaValley.

work for the Leslies, where I was to stay till the summer of 1936. I enjoyed my life style there, doing house work and tending the four children. All during the 'Dirty Thirties', Mrs. Leslie paid me all she got for the post office pay; ten dollars a month. I'm sure I didn't deserve it all, but was so thankful for it, that I did my best to please.

In the fall of 1936, Harold Ford and I were married. For the first ten years of our married life, we kept busy and happy. Harold was helping with the farming, as we lived just across the road from the main farm. Harold also enjoyed playing for dances in the district. He formed the Ford orchestra, with June Ferris.

We raised five children; Elmer, Jim, Kathleen (Kay), Danny, and Judy. By this time, our house was too small, so Harold decided to build his own. He and Ron Moody got together and went to the bush north of Debolt, for the winter. Each got out logs for new homes. In November, 1947, we moved in to our new house, unfinished, but warm.

Harold continued playing for dances all over the country, for a dollar a night. This was an important part of his life, as he loved music. During the war, his first orchestra broke up, and he formed a new one with Vernon (Fuzz) LaValley, John Ford and Patrick (Paddy) Brown. For many years, these boys played together.

In 1949, when the new Bezanson hall was built, our life became real hectic. We did the janitor work, I took care of the canteen and Harold played in the orchestra. Many times, there were three dances a week.

In 1951, we had the school bus route, using our panel truck, which held sixteen children. Harold was the bus driver, but when he was farming, as I had a license to drive the bus, I took over the job. Thank goodness there wasn't a drivers test then, for our own vehicle, only the written tests. One thing that stays in my mind, is that when there were a few mud-holes on our route, I'd take the boys along to drive through them, then I'd continue on the dry road. The boys learned to drive early, as they followed the men, and were allowed to drive anything on the farm. We kept the school bus job, until 1965, and, eventually, each of the boys drove it as they came of age.

In 1952, we began a small store business of our own, on our own property south of the present store, at Bezanson. In 1954, we purchased the Co-op store building. This was known for years as the P. G. Rooney store. We worked hard and learned, in this old building, till 1957. Then, we built the new store and had all the old ones removed. We all helped in this venture, including our children, relatives and the goodness of many of our dear friends and neighbors. Otherwise, we might not have succeeded in this undertaking. We also had the post-office in connection with our store.

We sold the store in June, 1965, due to a heart condition of Harold's, and the boys venturing out on their own. The boys, and their father, had taken up homestead land, north of Debolt, known as the Puskwaskau country.

Three years later, we were to re-possess the business.

In June, 1968, Harold passed away of a heart attack. We had been married for thirty years. In November, of the same year, our son, Jim, and his wife, Donna, took over the business and managed it till it was sold, to Neil Patterson, in 1975.

Our children are all married. Elmer and Joan, and two children, live in the hamlet of Bezanson. Jim and Donna, and their three children, live on the farm north of Debolt. Kay, and her husband Keith Coney, and their children, are on the farm north of Debolt, also. Danny and Marion, and three children, are now living in Rocky Mountainhouse, where he is in the refrigeration business.

Judy and her husband, Mark Purves, and three children, live on the home place, at Bezanson, which Mark purchased from me in 1969.

In 1972, while visiting in Chilliwack, B.C., I met and married a retired farmer, from Compeer, Alta., Jack Sieben. Our home is here in Chilliwack.

HARVEY FORD

Harvey grew up with Myrtle and Elsie for playmates. He never liked it, and is sure it stunted his growth, but they spent many happy years; climbing trees, peeking in birds' nests, rafting on sloughs and catching frogs, chasing tires or hoops to make lovely tracks in the mud, or galloping for miles straddle a stick for a horse.

He was never too fond of the stock, but was forced to learn the art of milking cows, pail feeding bawling calves and carrying the remaining milk to the pigs, along with the other kid stuff; like handpumping the monstrous horse-trough full of water in the afternoon, so the chill would be off when the horses came in from field work. He took his turn driving the school team, when Ross and Vern left school.

Harvey took a job driving truck, hauling lumber for Bickell, where he met, and later, arrived Arlene Lenis, who was supervising school. They made their home in Grandma and Grandpa Lenis' old house, until they built a squared-log house, on their farm, in the Goodwin district. They lived there, until they sold the farm to Henry, and moved their house to Debolt. Harvey and Joe Lenis trucked freight from Grande Prairie to Valleyview, and Arlene worked as a secretary, as teachers were available, making supervisors no longer necessary.

In 1961, they bought the Coogan farm; built a new house, and went into the dairy business. Harvey also drove the school bus.

Their family of three; Derryl, born in 1945, Barbara in 1950, and Maurie in 1959, went to school at Ridgevalley. Barbara married Peter Hess and is living in Edmonton. They have three children; Jason born in 1969, Raeann in 1971 and Garret in January of 1977. Darryl, still a bachelor, works for the oil rigs, as does Harvey since he sold his milk cows in 1975. Maurie is taking his grade 12 and Arlene still keeps busy with her secretary work.

HENRY FORD

Henry was a quiet boy and sort of a loner. His habit of tramping around the farm with a toque pulled on his head and a walking stick in hand, slipping away through the fields to visit neighbors, (usually to Roy Ames, when he felt Robert and Donald were lonesome

for him), earned him the nickname of 'Tizzie', after Henry Tisdale, who the kids got a bang out of.

Even Tizzie had his body-building exercises, giving a hand with the cream separator, taking his turn carrying firewood or water, milking cows and all the other chores the older boys outgrew.

He grew up during the transition period from horses to cars, trucks and tractors. Other than driving the school team to Lindsay and harrowing or working in the fields, threshing for a few years, horses didn't play an important part in his life.

Working with Harold on the farm, he learned the working ways of motors, preparing the way for the ingenious fixes that he had to come up with to keep his gravel and trucking business going.

Henry bought a second-hand cement blockmaker and started making blocks, but found it was too outdated to make the sophisticated blocks needed around windows and doors of buildings. It was too old a machine to invest the twenty or thirty thousand dollars it would take to bring it up to date. After making blocks for several basements, part of the McGavin bakery and Gordon Crowe's house, the venture was dropped.

Many years were spent graveling roads or trucking sand to Jackey's concrete culvert business and construction work.

Henry and Shirley McArthur, from Debolt, were married and settled in the old Ford home. Henry was still in the gravel business and his truck hauled lumber, in the winter months, for several years. When he became interested in beef cattle, trucking was gradually phased out.

He and Shirley have four children; Phyllis, born in November of 1955, married Laurie Lindgren, a schoolmate, and they are living in Fort McMurray with their two children; Colon, born April of 1971, and Coreen, born in May of 1974. Gordon, born in January of 1957, is working in Grande Cache and is thinking of marriage. Eleanor, born in January of 1960, has a clerking job in Grande Prairie. Her wedding is planned for June, 1977. Bill, born in August of 1963, is still in school.

Shirley is busy with her job in the Grande Prairie Co-op meat department, and Henry is busy with his cattle and driving the school bus.

JOHN FORD

John, the youngest of the boys, tried for years to make men of Janet and Verna. They had to be man enough to carry a snake or hold a weasel or muskrat, while he skinned it.

Influenced by the older boys, John, at the age of four or five, learned, on one string, to play the violin; sitting with closed door, on the stairway. Miss Lewis must remember him going to show her how he could play; and telling her she would have to stand up, before he could play "God Save the King".

John learned fast, and at the age of twelve, played the guitar for dances. He, soon, was able to take a turn on the piano or piano-accordian. Playing in the Ford orchestra was a way of life for John, for many years. He and Joyce Hart were married in June of 1953. They moved the old ferry shack to the Ford farm, where they lived for six years and farmed with Fred and Henry.

In 1959, John took a job driving a fuel truck for Hal Tipper. They bought a house, and moved to Grande Prairie. A few years later, John bought the Hart farm, and moved to the Clairmont district.

He, and Herb Steeves, took over the Royalite business and ran it until Gulf bought Royalite.

John and Joyce had three children; Gary, who was born in 1955, married Brenda Hafner and is working for AGT and living in Peace River; Vera, born in 1957, married Brian Weeks in January, 1976. They are living in Grande Prairie. Brian drives a truck for Thovesons; Dale is working for Motor City and lives at home.

John is working at a Texaco Service station. He also tunes pianos.

THE ROSS FORD'S

Ross was shy and mischievous in his younger years. He loved horses and stock, and dreamed of having a ranch some day, as many of the young boys dreamed at that time.

The school kids will remember the wild rides they had. When the school team was needed for field work in the spring or fall, Fred's driving team was used. After being dismissed from school at 3:30 Ross, standing in the wagon and clutching the reins, would shout, "Is everybody here?", while Vern stood, tug in hand, until given the word "Go!". The tug was hooked, Vernon, in pure glee, made a jump for the wagon and they were off, horses running flat out; the wagon jumping near off the ground and kids hanging on for dear life for the first half mile. By that time, Ross had the team under control.

Geraldine Jensen (Stark) must laugh at the exciting races she, riding Skip, had with the Ford wagon. Needless to say, she always won, but it was great while it lasted. Then there were the upsets in the snow when the sleigh ran off the narrow track. Kids were



Back row, left to right: Kenneth, Helen, Francis and Dennis. Noreen and Ross with Douglas standing between — 1972.

seen digging themselves, lunch buckets and books, out of the snow. No one seemed to get hurt. It must have been that the kids were tough little suckers in those days.

Following his schooling in the Lindsay school, Ross helped at the home place until he joined the Air Force during World War II. On his release from the Armed Forces, he purchased Tom Burt's land along the Smoky River. In 1946, he married Noreen O'Connell. Their oldest daughter was born on the farm, but the family moved to the Bezanson hamlet so that their children, Frances, Dennis, Kenneth, Helen and Douglas, might have easier access to the Bezanson School, where Noreen taught for thirteen years. When the Junior High was closed, Noreen went to teach at Harry Balfour, Grande Prairie, where Douglas received his schooling.

Besides farming his half section, Ross, along with brothers, Henry and Fred, trucked sand and gravel from the pit on his farm, and made concrete blocks on the home place. He kept milk cows until 1972. For a number of years, he and his wife, played in the Ford orchestra.

In 1961, their home was destroyed by fire. A new home was built on the site, where the family now live.

Ross passed away at the University Hospital, Edmonton, on Christmas Eve, 1973.

Frances is married to Brian Coney and lives in Grande Prairie with their two sons, Darcy and Eldon. Dennis is married to Judy Gunson, and also lives in Grande Prairie with their two sons, Grant and David. Ken, Helen and Doug live at home.

GORDON AND VERNA CROWE (FORD)

Gordon Crowe was born in Hanna, Alberta, in 1926. It was there he lost his father. He started school at Dundee. After a few years, his family moved to Vermilion. In 1935, they moved to Edmonton, where his mother raised him and his three sisters.

In the spring of 1943, he finished school and went working, with Doug Lindsay, for the Dept, of Highways, near Athabasca. He received 35 cents an hour, as cooks helper in a camp. Later, he worked his way up to dragline operator on highways and bridges through-out Alberta. In August, 1948, he came to the Big Smoky river to start work on the bridge.

Here, he met Verna Ford, who was cook's helper for Elsie. They were married in July, 1950, and moved to Devon, in their trailer home, to work on a bridge on the North Saskatchewan. From there, they followed the bridge crews over northern Alberta.

Verna will never forget Devon. After attending Myrt and Haps wedding, Don Olson and her sister, Janet, were driving her back home; when, on the river hill of the North Sask., the car slipped out of gear, the brakes failed, and down the hill into the river they went. Fortunately, the river was low, the water just up over the head lights, and they were able to get out and wade to shore.

In 1953, they moved back to Bezanson and built the first cement block house in the area. The blocks were made by the Ford boys. Here, they lived and raised their family, Joann and Janet.

Joann finished high school in Sexsmith and went on to Toronto to take a dental assistants' course. She worked for two years, then met Wayne Kempton. He was working as a draftsman for the Ontario government. They married and moved west to Grande Prairie and are now living in Hay River, N.W.T., where Wayne is working at the airport.

Janet also finished her schooling in Sexsmith, then took a nursing in Edmonton. She returned to Grande Prairie to work in the General Hospital and is boarding with Betty McLaughlin.

VERNON AND PAT FORD

Vernon was a mischievous, quick-witted tease; you would give him a clout, then feel sorry for him. He and Ross were constant companions, playing ball, swimming in muddy dugouts or trapping weasels and muskrats. One day, he and Ross had a contest, with slingshots, to see which one could sink a pebble into the radiator, of the new Allis Chalmers tractor, deep enough to stay. When dad saw the damage, he went straight up, but with so many kids around, it remained one of those "who done it" mysteries that was never solved.

Vern never drove the school team, but he and Harvey became real expert at skimming along on skis behind the sleigh, pulled by long ropes.

Vernon was in the Royal Canadian Eng. Cor. stationed at Sardis, B.C., when he and Patricia Brown were married, on July 24, 1942. They lived in a rented cottage at Cultus Lake for two years.

He returned to Bezanson after the war, and they lived in a little two-room house Pat had built while he was away. They bought a half section of land from the Ford estate, and farmed with Harold for several years. Vern and Pats' family was growing. Sylvia was born in April of 1944, (while Vern was still in the army). Wayne was born in November of 1945. Gilbert was born in November of 1950. By this time, they had moved into the old Shadeen house, that Harold and Julia had vacated.

The house was old and Pat's dream was to have a cafe, so through a family effort and the help of Paddy, Pat's twin brother, the 'Trucker's Inn' was built, in the summer of 1955. Turkey and chicken dinners were served and enjoyed, at a dollar a plate. The lovely cold milk shakes are still remembered. Later, the Inn was sold due to Pat's health: George and Violet Knight operated it for a time.

Vernon took a job driving the B.A. fuel truck, for George Bowe in Valleyview. In time, they built a new home on their farm where they lived. Vernon worked for B.A., in Grande Prairie, now until the farm was sold, in the fall of 1962, to Russell Ames. Vern and Pat bought a house in Grande Prairie, where Vern died, suddenly, in December of 1962.

Sylvia and Ray Houle were married in May of 1961 and are now farming at Westlock with their four boys; Charlie, born January 1, 1962, Vernon, born in November of 1964, Brent, born in February of 1966 and Leslie, born in February of 1969.

Wayne married Sandra Scoot of Grande Prairie in May of 1963 and they are now living in Chilliwack, B.C. with an only child, Leeann, born in February of 1965.

Gilbert recently married an Edmonton girl, Jackie

Holliday, and is working for Off-shore Drilling, now stationed at Malta.

Patricia married Gordon McIntosh, from Dimsdale, in January of 1964, and lived on the McIntosh farm, where their two sets of twins were born; Duncan and Doreen, and Joyce and Jayson. Gordon passed away, after a lengthy illness, in July of 1969. Pat now resides, with her four children, in a rented house at Bezanson.

JANET REDFORD (FORD)

Janet was working, with Elsie, at the 'Way Inn', where she met Johnnie Sitsma. They were married in January, 1952. Johnnie was driving cats, or trucks, on construction jobs. They moved from place to place, until they bought a home in Prince George, B.C., where they raised their two girls, Terry and Tracey.

In time, Johnnie bought a crane; forming a company, 'Johnny's Rentals, Ltd., and started construction work for B.C. Railroads. He was working there, when he died, suddenly, in January, 1973.

Their two girls are married. Terry and Darcy Danforth, with little, boy, Toni, are living in London, Ont. Tracey and Frank Devellano, are living in Nanaimo, B.C. They have no family.

Janet remarried in 1976. She and George Redford have their home in Prince George, B.C.

JIM FORD FAMILY STORY — by Donna Ford

Jim was born Jan. 17, 1940 in the Grande Prairie hospital. He was the 2nd son of Julia and Harold Ford of Bezanson, Alberta. He has 2 brothers and 2 sisters. He went to school at Lindsay for 3 years and then to the school at the Bezanson Village.

For recreation he played ball and hockey. He worked in his Father's store until 1960. Then he struck out on his own and did construction work for Park Bros.

I (Donna) was born Aug. 23rd, 1943 at the High Prairie hospital. My parents were Charlie and Della Griffin of Kinuso, Alta. My father ran a taxi business for 30 years. I have 2 brothers and 1 sister. I was raised and educated in Kinuso, Alta. The school taught grades 1-2 and we had a big gymnasium. While I was in Junior High the school burned down, but another one was built to replace it. Nearby was a lake where we swan in summer, and skated in winter. We also had a curling rink in winter, (no artificial ice though) where we curled.

I married Jim, Nov. 17, 1962. The first winter we were married we lived in Grande Prairie, Alta. and then at Bezanson for a year. We went from there to Ft. St. John, B.C. and then to Dawson Creek, B.C.

In 1964, Jim started driving Canadian Coachways buses and did so until 1968. His father died in June, 1968 and we came back to Bezanson where we took over his parents' store. First we fixed up part of the basement of the store for a home but later bought a trailer home.

Meantime in 1964, there was a new part of the country opening up for sale north of Debolt, Alta. called the "Puskwaskau" district. Along with his parents, brothers and sisters we later obtained a half section each (14 qts. in all). Jim did some farming while still in the store business, but in 1973 we moved to our farm, taking our trailer with us.

There are approximately 30 families living there now permanently, and others coming and going.

We have 3 children; Charlene, Jamie and Shane. They are in grades 10, 8, and 6 respectively. They ride to school on a large school bus, 40 miles to "Ridge Valley" in the Crooked Creek area. Grades 1-12 are taught there. It is certainly different than when I went to school, I just had a few blocks to walk.

Seeing that farming is such a lucrative business Jim went out working once more (in winter) for Moodie's Construction to supplement our living on the farm.

THE ERNEST ALEXANDER FORD FAMILY

Ernest Alexander Ford was the seventh child in a family of ten born on the 1st of August 1891 to William Barnett Ford and Catherine Christina McQuarrie on their farm in North Cypress Municipality, Manitoba, near Ingelow. Ernie's early years were taken up with working with his Father on the farm and in the winter he would work in his Father's logging camp at Laurier, located in the Riding Mountains of Manitoba.

On the 12th of June 1916, Ernie, accompanied by his brother Will and a very close friend, Charlie Ames, left Manitoba bound for the Peace River Country. They came into Grande Prairie on the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railroad. They arrived in Grande Prairie on the 18th of June 1916 and went out to Bezanson with Jack Malloy and Tom Smith the following day to look at land.

Due to the fact that all the land around the Bezanson Townsite was taken, they decided on land where Bezanson is presently located. On the 22nd of June 1916 Ernie, Will and Charlie returned to Grande Prairie and filed on their land. They caught the first train to Edmonton on the 24th of July and returned to Manitoba. Ernie didn't return to Bezanson until after the War.

Ernie served in the First World War with the 43rd Cameron Highlanders and was later transferred to the



Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Ford on their golden wedding anniversary in 1974.

8th Batallion better known as the Little Black Devils (Winnipeg Rifles). Ernie was wounded on the 29th of September 1918 near the Berlonge Woods at Cambrais, France and spent the remainder of the War in England and was discharged from the Army on the 28th of February 1919.

In March of 1919, Ernie and Charlie Ames returned to the Peace River Country and worked at Rossers' Mill on the Wapiti River and returned to Manitoba in July, threshed that fall; then took the old threshing outfit to Regina, Saskatchewan after harvest and traded it off on new equipment and returned to Bezanson.



Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Ford with, left to right: Murray, Donna and Ivan.

During the winter of 1919-1920, Ernie, along with Charlie, Roy, Fred and George Ames set-up a sawmill at Moodie Crossing and cut up all of the lumber for their farms. During the summer of 1920 Ernie built the original farm home where Will and his family lived. The original site of the home was in the vicinity of Charlie Ames' present home and was moved to the new location in 1924 or 1925. Will's family came to Bezanson from Manitoba in December of 1920. In 1923 Ernie and Will built the barn which is still standing.

On the 1st day of December 1924, Rev. A. Forbes married Ernest Alexander Ford and Hazel Tealinda Shedin. Hazel had been living in the Bezanson area with Charlie and Della Lupton since 1911 when she came over the Edson Trail with the Luptons. Hazel was the fifth child in a family of five, born on the 15th of January 1905, to Matthew Shedin and Maria Sofia Andersson in Wetaskiwin, Alberta. Hazel completed her schooling in Grande Prairie and went to Edmonton to attend Normal School, where she received her Teaching credentials. Hazel taught school in the Bezanson area at the Lindsay School. Ernie and Hazel took up residence in the Harry Seeverson residence located across the road from Will's.

Ernie and Hazel had three children while living in Bezanson. Ronald Ernest was born on the 23rd of May 1927 and passed away from pneumonia on the 1st of April 1928 and is buried in the family plot at the Glen Leslie Cemetery. Ivan Velmar was born on the 31st of March 1929 and married Shirley DeWitt. Donna June was born on the 2nd of June 1932 and married Prince Ames and later Jack Mitchell. In 1938 Ernie and Hazel moved to Grande Prairie and a short time later had another son, Murray Douglas, born on the 30th of October 1938 and married Georgina Rae Parsons.

Ernie went into the Trucking Business when they moved to Grande Prairie and while he was trucking, he invented the first Rotary Grain Loader. This was a tremendous accomplishment for Ernie. However, he realized very little from his invention other than a great deal of satisfaction, because an attorney took too long getting the papers filed for the invention to the Patent Office. By the time the grain loader was patented several implement companies were already manufacturing the loader. Ernie and Hazel were also involved in the Insultation Business and owned a Meat Market and Grocery Store. They operated Ford's Grocery Store on Richmond Avenue in Grande Prairie until they retired in 1965.

Ernie passed away suddenly after a heart attack on the 29th of August, 1975 in Grande Prairie and was buried in the family plot at the Glen Leslie Cemetery. Ernie is best remembered as a good neighbor, an understanding, loving husband and father, a wonderful grandfather and a generous man who said "No" to no one when they were in need and would go without to see that those in need had the necessities of life. He was the type of man who never complained and always had a smile on his face.

Ernie and Hazel were accomplished musicians and loved the old time music. Most of the oldtimers in Bezanson and Grande Prairie remember Ernie and his violin. Ernie and Hazel both played in Ford's Orchestra and when they moved to Grande Prairie. Ernie played with Mel Rodacker and his Oldtimers on radio CFGP.

At the date of this publication Ernie is survived by his loving wife Hazel, who resides at the Central Park Lodge in Grande Prairie; Ivan and his family of Edmonton, Alberta; Donna and her family of St. Albert, Alberta; Murray and his family of Park City, Utah; his sisters Alice of Winnipeg, Manitoba; Kate of Brandon, Manitoba; Etta of Agassiz, British Columbia and Lil of Powell River, British Columbia; twelve grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Here ends a very short story of a truly humble pioneer family.

— wirtten by Murray Douglas Ford from actual interviews with Ernie and Hazel Ford during their lifetime. February 1977

NICK FRUNCHAK

Nick Wilbert Frunchak, fifth child of Wasyl and Frasina Frunchak, was born in Edmonton, in 1907. Wasyl Frunchak was employed as a dray man, for a number of years, in Edmonton. In 1913, he moved the family to a homestead in the Andrew district. Here, the Frunchak children, (Bill, John, Lena, Mary and Nick), walked three miles to school at Socherea. When the school burned down, they were forced to walk 8 miles to Bocovina for schooling, while the Socherea



Mr. and Mrs. Nick Frunchuk with, left to right: Edward and Donald.

School was being rebuilt by the community. Brick for the new school was hauled by horses from Mundare, by the Frunchak children, and others; making it a long day.

In 1920, at the age of 14, Nick Frunchak struck out on his own and spent a short time working, for local farmers, for $1 a day, or room and board. Soon, he returned to Edmonton, where he secured a job on the railroad. At the time, jobs were very scarce and it cost one dollar at the Unemployment Office, to obtain a job on the 'Edson Extra Gang'.

The Edson Extra Gang was a temporarily hired group of men, assembled to build a spur of the railroad, in through this area. Nick Frunchak was introduced to the 'Jigger' (a 3-wheeled handcart) on this, his first job, and became the water boy for the crew. Pay was 20 cents an hour for a ten hour day. After two months, the crew moved to Jasper, where Nick served as a flagman on the railroad. During the winter, the work stopped, and along with many others, Nick returned to Edmonton to wash dishes, in a local cafe, to survive.

The following spring, Nick sought employment on the railroad again. Along with six others, he was sent through Calgary to Consol, Saskatchewan, to project a spur of the railroad into North Dakota. While en route, on a local train, (one coach car and many freight cars) they were stranded for five days near Manyberries, because of hoardes of grasshoppers, ten inches deep, which made it impossible to move on the track. When the train pulled in to Manyberries, the townspeople shared their food with the stranded. Further along, at Consol, the water situation was critical and because of the stranded train and the drinking of slough water there were numerous deaths.

In 1925, Nick decided to visit his sister, (Lena Smashnuk), in Bezanson; near Grande Prairie. Here, Nick met Mr. Bill Ford, and became a farm hand on their large establishment. While in their employ for four years, Nick purchased a homestead in the Fitzsimmons District, as well as some land, which had been part of the Ford farm, in the Lindsay District. Peter and Lena Smashnuk worked the land for Nick. During this time, Nick trapped many muskrats, tanned the skins, and sister, Lena, fashioned fur caps that were much in demand by the local people.

In 1929, Nick left the Ford farm and returned to Edmonton, to settle in the Willingdon District; near Whitford; on the farm of Mr. Dick Huston, where he worked as a hired hand. Here, in 1934, he met and married, Kate Kokotailo, eldest daughter of Tom and Katrina Kokotailo. The couple resided on the Frunchak farm for one year, then moved to Andrew, where they ran a store. Active participation was taken in the church life at Socherea. Nick Frunchak and Mr. Mnoholitnay, built the church in 1935. It was renovated again in 1957.

Both sons, Don (born in 1935) and Ed (born in 1937), were born in Andrew.

Nick served as millwright, in the last war. When he was discharged, he did carpentering for a livelihood, and is still busy along these lines, even though he is retired. Nick and Kate presently reside in Edmonton, where they enjoy the benefits of good health and the freedom of retirement.

IRVING AND NETA GABOURY AND FAMILY — by a Bezanson friend

Irving was born on his father's farm in Little Falls, Massachusetts, U.S.A. His father, Peter Gaboury, married Clarice Heon in 1899 and they were to become parents of seven girls and four boys: Cora, Eugene, Edmund, Edward, Eva, Mabel, Evelyn, Pamiela, Irving and Phoebe. The Gaboury's came to Saskatchewan in 1912, in search of better farm land and settled in the Rosthern area. Their last three children: Pam, Irving and Phoebe were born in Saskatchewan. The family of eleven went to school and helped on their father's farm, while they grew up. As they reached maturity, each began a life of their own. Three lads, Gene, Edmund and Irving migrated to the Grande Prairie area in the 1930s and '40s.



Mrs. Irving Gaboury and children.



Mr. and Mrs. Irving Gaboury — 1939.

On May 29, 1939 Irving married pretty Neta Unruh at Laventure, Sask. Neta's maternal grandfather was a N.W.M. Police constable at Red River during the Reil Rebellion. Joe McKay was a rugged, well-respected man of that area in the early days. Neta recounts how he, at 85 years of age, would make a round-trip, horseback ride from Prince Albert to Duck Lake, a matter of nearly 100 miles, with the ease of a much younger person and he enjoyed every mile of the ride.

Neta's father, Peter Unruh, was born on a Manitoba farm. The girl he married was the Saskatchewan born Elsie McKay. They were united in marriage on Oct. 14, 1911 and farmed in the Prince Albert area. From this union, ten children were born: Margaret, Flora Ann, Edna, William (Bill), Neta, Ada Marie, Vonda, Wesley, Shirley and Vera.

At Laventure, after their marriage, Irving and Neta worked hard on the farm and on Feb. 28, 1941, their first child, Peter, was born and Walter joined this family on March 22, 1943. This family decided to come to the Bezanson area and in 1945 bought the Wes. Brewer farm in the Fitzsimmons S.D.

Neta and Irving spoke in glowing terms of the wonderful neighbors of the district, "Mr. and Mrs. Jim Coney, Sr. were the best friends and neighbors one could ever wish for," Neta said. Irving worked away from home to supplement the farm income and Neta recalled how, during his absence, a timber fire had caused her great anxiety. The smoke was so dense, visibility was to a hundred yards and she frantically carried pails of water from a nearby slough, to fill every barrel, tub and pot she could find in case the hot ashes, which drifted down, would set their home on fire. The wind changed directions and saved the little farmstead from destruction. Three children: Loraine, born on Feb. 27, 1945, Bill was born on March 17, 1946 and Laverne on Oct. 14, 1947, joined the Gaboury family. When Peter became of school age, Irving sold his land and moved to Bezanson so his little son was nearer to the school. The house was moved onto the Ford land, just a bit north of the Bezanson post office. Irving went to work for Grande Prairie Iron Works; later worked for Hystads at a mill 40 miles south of Dimsdale. Gerard (Gerry) was born Dec. 1, 1948, while the Gaboury's were living at Bezanson.

They enjoyed the dances, picnic and other social events held in the Fitzsimmons and Lindsay schools during their years in the district. They had many new friends at Bezanson and the Fords helped in numerous ways, while Irving was working at mills and Neta was left to maintain the home with six small children to care for.

In 1950 the family decided to homestead in the Sunset House area. Three more children were born: Harvey on Nov. 1, 1950 — Linda on March 9, 1952 and Laurence (Lorry) on July 11, 1953. The family worked hard on their farm, acquired a small sawmill, logged and made lumber. Over the years the children went to school, helped on the family farm, later the boys worked on oil rigs and construction outfits and the farm prospered. During these years, Mr. and Mrs. Gaboury became foster parents to a family of six Bullerwell children, all under the age of eight years, for a period of two years (and a teen-age foster daughter, Ruth Chatalaine). There were still more to follow: Joe and Irvin Badger, another foster daughter Linda Mae and as they lovingly recalled all the names of their foster children, I lost count. But it would be safe to say close to twenty children, over these years, enjoyed the good experience of being a part of this warm hearted family.

In 1970 the farm was sold to their son Walter and they bought land adjacent to Highway 34, and a few miles south of Valleyview. Neta and Irvin live in a large modern home, where the welcome mat is still on the doorstep and they keep busy with a mixed farming operation.

Peter married and has two sons, Shanon and Jeffery. For a few years he owned and managed the Double N Transport Co. He sold the business and now has gravel and logging trucks. In July, Pete and Pat are moving the family to a new home they bought in Bezanson on the Eli Kochalyk place.

Walter owns and farms the family homestead at Sunset House. He married Ellen Sullivan. They have three children: Andrea, Anthony and Kelly. Loraine is a Public Health Nurse in the Valleyview area. She married Emile Johnson and they farm and live near Guy, Alta. Their children are Harvey, Curtis and Rodrick.

Bill resides in Grande Prairie and he works as a heavy machine operator.

Laverne works as a heavy equipment operator for the oil companies at Inuvik and helps on the farm.

Gerry works in Valleyview, but lives and farms at Guy. He married Nora Kelly and they have three children: Clinton, Jeanette and Terry.

Harvey is still single, works in Inuvik as a heavy equipment operator, and helps at home during his holidays.

Linda married Cameron Lange, who farms and runs a backhoe operation. They have two girls: Adrienne and Alisson.

Lawrence is a mechanic at Curtsy Esso, in Valleyview. He married Wendy Mahon and their two children are: Tamara (Tammy) and Lawrence (Lorry).

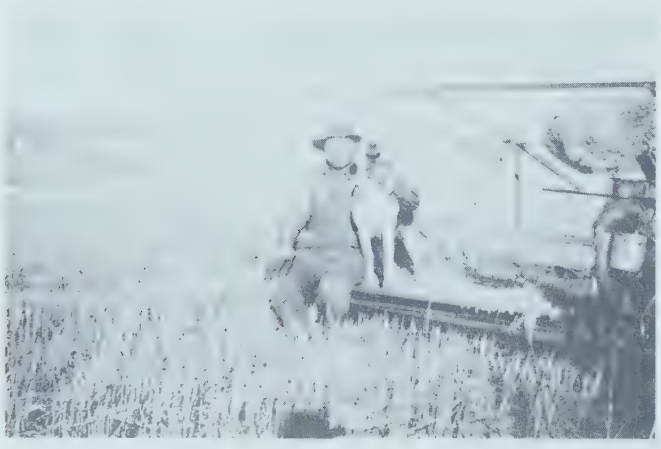
With justifiable pride, Irving and Neta told of the financial assistance and help they received from their children over the past years and gave the family much credit for the progress, which they enjoy today. What means even more to this couple is the respect and warm family ties that exists among their children.

VERN GOFF AND FAMILY — by Dina Goff

Vern came to Alberta from Montana in the 1920's. He shipped in all his household goods, farm machinery and stock, including six good work horses and a Hamiltonian saddle mare, named Babe, that he was very fond of and enjoyed riding.

He settled on a farm, near the Wainright Buffalo Park and, during the winter months, he hauled feed to the buffalo. It was an exciting and dangerous chore, as the buffalo often came charging to be fed.

In 1928, he again loaded all his possessions and moved to Grande Prairie. He rented a farm, in the Glen Leslie district, east of Grande Prairie.



Vern Goff.

The following year my dad, Didrik Jensen, came to Grande Prairie, from the dried out prairies of southern Saskatchewan, and bought the farm. Vern then moved to a farm at Crystal Creek. He farmed there for several years and that is where I first met him.

In 1935, we were married and moved to the Charlie Weaver farm at Glen Leslie. It was while farming there that Vern bought his first tractor. Also while there our two sons, Gerald and Lorne, were born.

After leaving the Weaver farm, we moved around some but finally bought a farm at Bezanson and settled down. Vern enjoyed farming and raised very good crops during his years at it.

After a short illness, he passed away, July 12, 1960, at the age of 65.

Gerald has lived on the farm since his father's death. He married Dianne Speirs of Nelson, B.C., on July 4, 1961. They have three sons; Vern, Dennis and Jay, and they also enjoy living on the farm.

Gerald, Dianne and sons raise Quarter horses and Simmental cattle. Last year (1976) Vern showed a ½ blood Simmental heifer at the County Fair and is very proud of his red ribbon. They have won many ribbons and trophies for their Quarter horses, too.

Once, when I was out at the farm, Vern was going to ride out to the field to bring the cattle in. He saddled one of these gentle two-year-old Quarter horses and was very neatly dumped off. But Vern didn't give up, he got up again and rode away for the cows.

Vern and Dennis attend the County school at Sexsmith, and both are doing very well. Vern enjoys playing with the children.

Dianne has driven one of the Bezanson school buses, taking students to the County school, at Sexsmith, for 8 years.

Lorne married Leta Moon, daughter of Pearl and the late Charlie Moon of Bezanson, on November 7, 1958. A few years after their marriage, he joined the Forestry Service. He began as Assistant Ranger, at Debolt on December 2, 1962. Since that time, he has put in duties at South Wapiti, Sunset House, High Prairie and Slave Lake. He was appointed Fire Control Officer at the Slave Lake Division in August of 1971. He finds the work interesting and challenging and the family enjoys living at Slave Lake. Having supper at the Lake is a usual outing all through the summer.

Garry, Lorne and Leta's older son, has taken all his High school training at Slave Lake and graduates on June 3, 1977. He likes to play ball, skate and curl.

Dave attends elementary school and plays hockey with the Slave Lake Mites.

Lisa, still at home, likes to bake in the Holly Hobby Oven she got for a Christmas gift.

I live in my mobile home, in Grande Prairie, conveniently located in the Grandview Trailer Court just across from Safeway Plaza, and only a short walk from the Grande Prairie Mall.

HENRY GRESKO

Henry Gresko was born in Poland on December 18, 1889. In 1925, he left his home and traveled across the ocean to settle in Windthorst, Saskatchewan.



Henry Gresko and outfit.

On March 18, 1930, he married Annie Chonka. Times were bad and after several years of drought, in the spring of 1935, they gave up, packed their belongings, and headed for the Peace River Country.

They rented a farm at East Kleskun, and farmed there until 1942, when they bought a farm at Bezanson.

They had four daughters. Ada (Lyle Berg), Bezanson, works at the school as the school secretary and caretaker. Annie (Paul Menard), Bezanson, homemaker. Eileen (Paul Kyle), Cold Lake, homemaker. Gloria (Lyle Lawrence), Grande Prairie, homemaker.

Henry Gresko passed away November 6, 1949. His widow, Annie, still lives on the home place at Bezanson.

ANNIE (HAWRYLUK) OE

Annie Hawryluk married Rene Oe, of Bezanson, and still resides there on the farm.

BOHDAN AND ELLEN HAWRYLUK

Ellen Ford, the young woman who had captured his heart as a tiny girl, bouncing on her father's knee, married Bohdan Hawryluk on July 18, 1947. They set up housekeeping on the farm Bohdan and his father, Michael, had farmed together until Michael's retirement to Grande Prairie, in 1956. Bohdan and Ellen then bought the farm and moved from their little house into the large farm house vacated by the senior Hawryluks. This milestone, in the families' lives, is well remembered by each family member.

Bohdan and Ellen had five children: Maxine, Diane, Joyce, John and Penny. The three eldest girls were often referred to as, "Our boys", Max, Dan and Jo; so John's arrival was a great family occasion. Penny arrived nine years later and, because of her mental handicap, holds a special place in the family's hearts.

In the spring of 1972, a shadow was cast over the family's lives when it was discovered that Ellen had cancer. The following two and one-half years, until her death in 1975, were emotionally charged years, as the family rejoiced at her supposed recovery, only to find that, within a short period of time, the cancer had re-occurred.

At present, Bohdan is working away from the farm, but returns home on weekends. Maxine is married to Jim Robertson. They, and their family of two: Deanna and David, reside in Whitehorse. Diane lives in Edmonton, where she is employed at the Industrial Research and Training Centre. Joyce is married to Terry Lock. They, and their little girl, Jocelyn, reside in Grande Prairie. John is married to Marilyn Doll. They, and their daughter, Shawndel, are also living in Grande Prairie. Penny resides at the Barrydale Home and attends the Peace School of Hope. On weekends, she lives with her sister, Joyce, and her family. She occasionally spends weekends with her father.

MARY (HAWRYLUK) NAYLOR

My dad, Mr. Mike Hawryluk homesteaded two miles north of Bezanson.

My memories go back to my early childhood. I remember a log house dad built. It was plastered inside and out, with specially prepared mud. There was also a canvas lean-to which was used as a storage place and play room.

My recollection of the outside world was scary. The Edson trail went through dad's homestead right past our house. We could hear wagons coming from a far-off distance. As we were new in the country, and couldn't speak English, I was petrified of strangers. A Cree family, later became our nearest neighbor. Neither of us could speak English. However, it wasn't long before we learned each other's native tongue.

When I entered Lindsay school, I knew very few English words. By the time I was in my teens, and finished the final grade taught there at that time, my ambition was to leave the farm. Going to high school, at that time, was very difficult.

I left home, at an early age, during the depression, and went to work for fifty cents a day.

During the Second World War, I followed my husband while he was training in Canada. Later, I settled in the Okanagan Valley of B.C., for a number of years, where I raised my family alone, until they married and left home.

Being free, I ventured out to see parts of the world that was of my interest in younger years. I traveled around in different parts of B.C., by working as a cook, until 1966. Later, I moved to the Yukon for six years. I can say that was an experience of many adventures. To travel the Alaska Highway had been one of my desires since it was first built. I have enjoyed every mile of the trips I have made.

I have three daughters, Sonja Makayew, Grace Rich and Margaret-Ann Dyck, all of Sicamous, B.C. and one son, Bud Naylor, at Fort St. John, B.C. I, also, live in Fort St. John. The landscape of this part of the Peace River country, reminds me of my childhood on dad's homestead, in Bezanson, where I grew up. They were happy days after all.

MICHAEL AND KSENIA HAWRYLUK — by Peter Hawryluk

My father, Michael Hawryluk, was born in Austria, July 21, 1882. He came to Canada, with his parents, in



Mike Hawryluk family — Feb. 5/70 — 65th wedding anniversary. Dad, Mary, Bohdan, Olha, Pete, Annie, Nellie and Mom.

1899, where they settled on a homestead in Valley River, Manitoba.

In 1905, he married Ksenia Boyartchuk and went farming on his own. He bought an eighty acre farm, which was light soil, lots of rocks and gophers and many inhabited insects. After trying to make a living on those eighty acres, he decided to go elsewhere.

In 1913, with his wife and two children, he left the farm and came to Edmonton. While in Edmonton, he worked on the railroad, and other odd jobs, for a year until the depression forced him to move back to Manitoba. Once more, he struggled on those eighty acres, for another three years.

In April, 1917, he came to the Peace River country, and settled in Bezanson. He paid the government $10 for a 160 acre patch of bush land. This was N.W. 26-72-3 W6th. He built it into a farm and a home for the family.

He brought his wife, Ksenia, and three children, Peter, Annie, and Mary with him. For farming, he had a walking plow, harrows, wagon and sleigh. He also had a team of oxen, a cow, two heifers, a sow and some chickens.

That spring, he dug a garden patch with a spade, and planted a garden. By winter, he had built a house and barn. Both constructions were of poplar logs, cut as close as they could be to the building site. The house was plastered with clay mixed with cow manure and straw. This was put in to keep it from cracking. This plaster was put on until all the logs were covered and the walls were even. When it was completely dried, it was whitewashed. Both the interior and exterior were finished the same way. The floor joists were round logs hewed on one side. The floor was made out of rough lumber.



Hawryluk family 1920's — Peter, Dad, Mom, Annie, Bohdan, Olha, Nellie and Mary.

Heat was supplied by a cast iron heater and a cook stove, using poplar wood, sawed by hand. Light was a colonial kerosene lamp and candles.

The barn was also plastered, but did not have the same finish as the house. The roof was made out of sod and, during the winter, snow had to be shovelled off when the weather turned warm.

During the first summer, he broke two acres of land and a larger garden patch. This was cleared with an axe and a grub hoe. The following year, he seeded the two acres to oats and broke another seven acres. In the fall, the oats was cut by hand with a scythe and tied by hand into bundles and stooked. When the stooks were dry enough, they were stacked and, when winter came, they were threshed by hand. To thresh his crop, he shovelled off a patch of snow about thirty by forty feet, and flooded it until he had a smooth floor of ice. On this ice floor, he threshed his crop with a flail and used wind, when it blew, to clean it. Later, he built a fan to clean the grain. He used this method until he had an acreage big enough for a threshing machine to move onto the old homestead without charging for the move. The first threshing machine that threshed for him, was fed by hand and the tie bands had to be cut by hand and bundles pushed into the machine by hand.

The first granary, that was built, had a thatched roof to keep the grain dry and was also used for storing flour and other necessities.

Everything was done by oxen; field work, wood hauling and trips to town, which was Grande Prairie, twenty-four miles away. Kleskun Hill was the nearest post office, seven miles away. There were no graded roads; only bush trails.



Grandma and Grandpa Hawryluk and their family. Grandma passed away on May 28, 1977.

The garden was a very essential part, and usually large enough to supply needs for summer and winter. Vegetables grown were; potatoes, beets, carrots, onions, peas, cabbage, turnips, lettuce and radish. Carrots and beets were stored among the potatoes, where they usually kept from getting soft. Lots of peas were grown and dried, then stored for the winter. Cabbage was made into sauerkraut by the barrel, as whole heads were put into it for cabbage rolls. One time when the barrel was almost empty and sitting out in the yard, a cow came along and got her head stuck in it. It wouldn't come off until the cow ran into a tree and knocked it off. My sister said to shoot the cow and save the sauerkraut.

Water was supplied from a well dug about ten to twelve feet on the edge of the slough, and seepage water was used for the house. Sometimes, it dried up in the winter. Then, snow was melted for house and stock.

Since there weren't too many sealers, saskatoons

were dried for winter use. A variety of mushrooms were also gathered in the summer and dried.

Grains grown were; wheat, oats, and barley. Buckwheat was also grown to make buckwheat grits. Buckwheat to Ukrainians is just like oats to a Scotsman.

As years went by, more land was cleared. Oxen were replaced by horses. Better and bigger machinery was bought and another quarter of land was bought, S.W. 26-72-3 W6th. On this half section, he farmed until he retired in 1956. There was a family of eight children. First were twin girls who passed away within two weeks after birth. Other children are: Peter, Annie, Mary, Olha, Bohdan and Anastzia (Nellie).

In February, 1971, they celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary.

Dad passed away, at the age of 87, in June of 1971. Mother, at the age of 91, resides in Grande Prairie.

OLHA (HAWRYLUK) WARN

I, Olha Hawryluk, was born, February 21st, 1919, at Bezanson, Alberta. I attended Lindsay school, school district No. 3898. I married William Francis Warn, of Groundbirch, B.C. on June 17th, 1948. We now reside in Dawson Creek, B.C.

Bill traps and is a game guide and outfitter. He sold his guiding area, in the year of 1976, and now only traps.

We have two sons, Patrick William, born November 3, 1950, at Dawson Creek, B.C. and Russell Michael, born April 3, 1953, at Grande Prairie, Alberta. They attended school in Dawson Creek, B.C.

Patrick graduated in 1968, and was employed with the B.C. Forest Service, for five years. He, then, decided to get himself some land, and, with his dad's land, took up a career in farming. He lives at home with his parents.

Russell is now married, and lives in Dawson Creek, B.C. He married Karen MacDonald, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert MacDonald, of Dawson Creek. Russell and Karen have one child, a son, Shawn William Warn, born October 21st, 1976. Russell works with Viponds Construction and hopes to become a finishing carpenter for his career.

PETER HAWRYLUK

I, Peter Hawryluk, attended Lindsay school and completed my grade seven. My first teacher was Miss Carter. After completing school, I farmed with my father.

In the thirties, I bought a quarter of land, N.W. 25-72-3 W6th, of my own and we farmed together.

In the fall of 1939, I married a local girl, Jean May Rice. We then settled on my farm, and I continued farming until the fifties, when we moved to Edmonton, where I worked. From there, we moved to Golden, B.C., where I worked as a millwright. We then moved to Prince George, B.C., where I am now living.

We had a family of six: four boys and two girls. The oldest, Richard, joined the Army and was overseas for several years. There, he met Inga Toews, whom he married. They have two children, Dianna and Dwight, and are living in Williams Lake, B.C. The rest of the family are living in Prince George, and are all married. Jean married Lorne Burns. They have two girls, Sharon and Tina. Michael and Joey have two boys: Aaron and Nathen. Daryel and Sylvia have a girl, Leah. Linda is married to Mike Ferguson. They have a son, Lee. One son, Thomas Sydney, passed away several days after birth.

My wife, May, passed away in March, 1971.

MR. AND MRS. ARTHUR H. HOWE

My father, Arthur Hervert Howe, was born August 31, 1882 at Houston, Minnesota. My mother, Ethel Annie Dorothy Sexton, was born September 23, 1898.

At the time of their marriage, both were residents of St. Louis County, Minnesota. They were married April 28, 1915 at Duluth, Minnesota. Their first home was at Danbury, Wisconsin, where their first two children were born: Rowland Herbert, born February 19, 1916, and Grace Charlotte, born March 4, 1918.

Dad was more hunter and trapper than farmer, and I think this, plus a pioneer spirit, was what promoted him to move to Northern Canada.

They traveled to Grande Prairie by train about April 1, 1918. Grace was only three weeks old when they left Wisconsin. Dad filed on the S.E. 33-72-3 W6 on May 14, 1918. The land is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Bulford. Mother and the two children stayed at the hotel in Grande Prairie while Dad built a temporary tent house to live in until the log house was finished. Grace became very ill with pneumonia and was attended by Mrs. Turner who, my parents said, saved her life.

Elmer Moody, who came to Grande Prairie from Wisconsin with Dad and Mother, helped put up a fair



Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Howe — April, 1915.

sized log house for us and later brought his own family to Canada.

I was the only one of the children born on the homestead. They named me Violet Alice, born August 13, 1919. Some of my very first memories are of the northern lights crackling and wolves howling on the little lake in front of the house.

Our youngest brother, William Michael, was born May 31, 1921, at the hospital in Grande Prairie.

Living along the Edson trail was interesting in those days, as many people still used it to go to Bezanson and Grande Prairie. My Dad always said we could tell when spring came because the Indians would change their sled runners to wheels. I well remember the white fish they brought to us. No fish has tasted that good since.

Our closest neighbors were Mac McEachern, Frank Flannery, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Field, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Regnier and Mr. and Mrs. Pat Rooney. Other friends were Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Moody, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Secrest, Mr. and Mrs. Abner Graham, Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Brewer, Tom Rice, Tom Langdon, Mike McGee and Bill Drynon.

We lived on the homestead until the spring of 1925, then sold the place and moved to Wembly so the children could start school. We went to Hillhead school, one mile from Wembley. Our teacher's name was Miss Foy. We stayed there until Christmas, then moved to Grande Prairie, and for the rest of the school term went to Montrose school. Mrs. Clifford was our teacher.

In 1926 the folks decided to move back to the states. Dad went ahead to find work. Mother and us children left Grande Prairie about April 1 on the train, bound for Okotoks where Dad was to meet us. We arrived there sick with the flu. Mother was hospitalized and died a few days later. She was buried at Calgary.

We eventually settled in California, where all of us still live. The many years Dad spent in California were spent in prospecting and gold mining. He had several claims in Shirttail Canyon at Forest Hill, California, which he maintained until his death in 1956.

ELENA (KOCHALYK) TANCHAK

Elena, the fifth child of Nicholas and Joanna Kochalyk, was born at Bezanson, Alberta on September 26, 1920. She attended Lindsay public school and graduated from Grande Prairie high school, in 1940. After graduation, she went to Montreal to study nursing, and obtained her diploma, from Women's General Hospital, in 1943.

Elena returned to Alberta in August of 1944, and, while working in Edmonton, met William Peter Tanchak of Rosa, Manitoba. The two were married, on the Kochalyk farm in Bezanson, on Christmas Day, in 1944, and moved to Vancouver, B.C. in January 1945.

They had two children, Allan William David, born on June 26, 1946, and Donna-Lynn Johanna, born on September 3, 1947. The children were raised in New Westminster, B.C., and both graduated from the University of British Columbia, in 1968.

Allan met, and married, Diane Marie Carter in Ottawa, Ontario, where their first son, David Allan was born, in 1970. They returned to B.C. in 1972, and their second son, Benjamin Allan, was born in New Westminster, B.C.

Elena and William are currently living in Burnaby, B.C., as are Allan and Diane; while Donna presently resides in Vancouver, B.C.

MARTHA (KOCHALYK) WAY

"Smoky River to Grande Prairie" sounds like a "fun book". Speaking of the Smoky, I have many fond memories of it. As a teenager we hiked five miles to ride back and forth on the ferry, to wade in the shallow water along the sandy beach and picnic under the tall trees on the opposite shore. Many gallons of blueberries were picked by our family along that river's flats. On a visit to Bezanson, my husband, Larry informed our children we were crossing the Smoky river, "Home of Smoky the Bear." Two days later they saw a black bear in the blueberry patch. For them, the Big Smoky had another claim to fame.

We were such an ethnic community at our end of the district. When we started celebrating Christmas the festivities lasted into January. Our family spent December 25th feasting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Zotique Menard. New Year's Eve was the Scottish celebration of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Coney's. How well I remember doing Highland Dances and the Scottish Reel into the wee small hours. January 7th was the Ukrainian feast for friends and neighbors at our home. What a great time we had.

Harvesting was another exciting time. The threshing crews went from farm to farm. Word had to be sent ahead as to what meal they were to prepare for, and I swear the farmers' wives competed to see who could prepare the biggest and best meal.

The Hungry 30's presented a special challenge. There was some agreement that the first load of grain threshed on each farm be hauled to the elevator immediately to pay for gasoline necessary to continue threshing. I remember my father, Nick Kochalyk, hauling in a load and the price was so low, he borrowed money to buy the barrel of gasoline. With the money from the grain he was able to purchase a jug of wine to boost the morale of his threshing crew.



Martha (Kochalyk) Way and son, Patrick.

As children we worked hard, played hard, and Mother and Dad saw to it that we studied the same way. We got elementary school and junior high at Lindsay, Senior High at Montrose, Grande Prairie in 1940. I worked at J. W. Bird's Store till summer of 1942, when Velva Regnier and I attended Normal School in Edmonton. For six years I taught in the North, registered in the Faculty of Education, went to summer school every year till the fall of 48. I returned to University, got my degree with a major in Home Economics. Larry and I met while attending University, we taught at Cadomin on the Coal Branch. We were married in Lacombe in 1954 where I was teaching at the time.

Our oldest daughter, Margaret Joanne married William Donald (Don) Whyte on May 1st, 1976.

Don graduated from U. of C. in Civil Engineering last year. Joanne is graduating in Electrical Engineering at the end of April, 1977.

Kevin Kirkpatrick, our oldest son, is in 3rd year honours Math and Economics at University of Alberta.

Ian Grant and Koren Suzanne attended Queen Elizabeth High School where my husband Larry teaches.

At present I am teaching Clothing and Textiles at Central Memorial High School in Calgary.

Larry and I live in Calgary, lead a busy, happy life in our southern city.

NICHOLUS KOCHALYK

Nicholus Kochalyk came to Canada, with his parents, from the far-off Eastern Galicia, Austria, in 1887, at the age of ten years. They settled on a homestead near Dauphin, Manitoba. A small hamlet, called Sifton, was their post office.

Things were not easy in those days. The land was poor, sandy and stoney. After a number of years, as they developed and improved their farm, things looked better.

As the family grew up, Nicholus decided to take the farm over from his father. In early 1910, he married Joanna Boyartchuck, and they farmed there until 1916. During this period, three children were born to them: Wladymir, Annie and Olga.

During this time, the papers carried reports of land being opened for homesteads in the far West; the great Peace River country of Alta.

Nicholus' brother, Mike Kochalyk, was working on the railroad, which was pushing its way northward to Grande Prairie. As he, also, had heard of the land opening up for homesteading, he wrote home, telling of this and about the country. In the spring of 1916, with his brother-in-law, Mike Hawryluk, he decided to see for himself, and journeyed Westward. They arrived in the Peace River country, and scouted around for land. When they found what they were looking for, good new land, they filed on the S.E. 27-72-3 W6th, about 24 miles northeast of Grand Prairie. Immediately, they started to build a home. They borrowed a team of horses from a neighbor some miles away, cut and hauled dry poplar logs from the bush; built the house of round logs and plastered it with mud. Thus, they made a new beginning in a new land.

Nicholus returned to Manitoba, and the following spring, 1917, he loaded their belongings on freight cars at Sifton. Included were: three oxen, two milk cows, two pigs, 12 chickens, a walking plow, drill, three harrows, mower, rake, tools and two flails used for the threshing of the grain. They headed for their new destination; the great new land of the Peace River Country! They arrived in Grande Prairie in July of 1917, and moved to their new home in the Kleskun Hill district. This was where they got their mail for a few years.

They cleared land for crops and a garden. Fifteen acres of land was broke that summer, with oxen and a walking plow. It was not an easy task, with these animals; for when it was hot and the flies were bad, they would head for the nearest water hole or slough. Sometimes you could stop them; other times you couldn't, so you would follow and cool off too. For the next three years, the oxen were used for all farm work.

That same summer, a combination barn and chicken house was built. A fire guard was ploughed around the building for protection from forest fires.



Mr. and Mrs. Nick Kochalyk and son, Ross.



Left to right: Elena, Martha, Annie and Mrs. N. Kochalyk.

In the spring of 1918, the first crop consisting of 8 acres of wheat and 7 acres of oats, was planted. The crop was fair that year, but got a touch of frost in August. However, it was a beginning. Next, was to get it threshed and no machine to do it with. So later, in the winter, when it was cold, they cleared the snow off a square patch about 20 by 30 feet, and flooded it with water. When it froze, it made a platform on which sheaves were spread and flails were used to knock the kernels of grain from the head. Then the straw was raked off and the grain and chaff were piled on the sides to be sifted on a windy day.

From 1918 to 1924 four more children were born: Jaroslou (Ross), Elena, Martha and Eli.

By 1926, Nicholus had purchased more land through the land office, increasing his farm and acreage to 640 acres. The next year he bought a threshing machine. Thus he solved the threshing problem for himself and his neighbors.

The next few years were busy ones, what with the children gowing up and more settlers moving in. There were lots of visitors, as the Edson Trail went right past the farm yard. The children were soon school age and as other settlers moved in with children of school age, a school was required. A school district was organized and was called Lindsay.

In 1946, Nicholus sold the farm to Wladymir and Eli. They continued farming until Wladymir sold his half, in 1972, and retired. Eli continued farming until he sold his share, in 1975, and moved to Clairmont, Alt.

Wladymir now lives at Bezanson, Annie at Grande Prairie, Olga at Portland, Oregon, Jaroslou (Ross) at Golden, B.C., Elena at Vancouver, B.C., Martha at Calgary, Alta. and Eli at Clairmont, Alta.

OLGA KOCHALYK (MRS. B. L. ANDERSEN)

I was born in 1916 and was 1½ years old when we moved from Dauphin, Manitoba, to a homestead located on the old Edson Trail, east of Grande Prairie.

I don't remember too much about the early years, except that every child had a job to do, as we had to live off the land. There was no money exchanged. Land was tilled with oxen, grain cut with a sickle and threshed with a flail.

I remember when the school was being built. Dad would take us there on a Sunday afternoon to prepare us for the big day when we would start our education.

I attended the Lindsay school through the 8th grade, and part of the 9th. However, as there were no higher grades at Lindsay, and we couldn't afford to go to the High School at Grande Prairie, much of my education came through correspondence courses. I attended Grande Prairie High School for 2 years, however, and worked as a maid at the Grande Prairie Hospital off and on until I finally completed my high school and received a Senior Matriculation Diploma.

I had made up my mind to be a nurse when very young, so when I was accepted as a student at the Women's General Hospital in Montreal, (my sister Elena was already there) I too was sent there. Father pruchased each of us a one way ticket. Therefore, we couldn't come home for our vacations until we graduated, got employment and earned enough money to come. The best Christmas present I ever had was my Diploma as an R.N. on December 23, 1943!

I rented a housekeeping room with two other nurses and did private duty nursing in Montreal to make enough money so that I could come back home. Elena and I came home by train in July, 1944.

I was determined to make more money than the average, so answered an ad in the Edmonton Journal where a nurse was needed at Mountain Park, Alberta, a coal mine at the end of the Coal Branch out of Edson. The year that I worked there was a tremendous experience for me.

In the fall of 1945, I went to Wells, B.C., where I worked for the Caribou Gold Quartz Mining Company, in a ten bed hospital. From there I went to Toronto, where I took a Post Graduate course in Tuberculosis nursing. However, I always seemed to go back West and preferred small communities. Therefore I stayed in emergency type nursing.

In January, 1950, I married Martin W. Jasper, a Mining Engineer from Seattle. So I moved to the U.S. on a Visa. We had one son, Patrick Rene Jasper. In 1953, we moved to Anchorage, Alaska, where Martin was employed by the Territorial Dept. of Mines and Minerals. We were there until 1971, at which time we sold our house and moved back to the State of Washington.

Patrick joined the army and spent the last eight months of his service in Vietnam. He took a course in T.V. camera and film editing in San Francisco, where he met Jeanne Broner, whom he married. They now live in Anchorage, Alaska, and to date they have no family.

My husband passed away in June, 1972, in Blaine, Washington, where we had settled. I went to work at the Icelandic Old Folks' Home in Blaine, in 1971, and stayed on until April 1976, at which time I remarried.

My present husband, Burton L. Andersen, also is a graduate Mining Engineer, who is working for an Engineering Consulting Firm specializing in design and construction of sewage treatment plants. He was born and raised at Leavenworth, Washington. He spent five years in the Military Service during the Second World War, in the Engineering Division, and worked in Arabia, Honduras, and Alaska, where I first met him.

I am now an American citizen, living in Portland, Oregon. But we will be touring the Peace River Country this fall, September, 1977.

TOM AND NELLIE LaVALLEY AND FAMILY — by Allie (LaValley) Weegar

The incredible courage of this couple, still fills me with humble admiration. They left their home, friends and families, to seek a new way of life on the raw, virgin land of Northern Alberta.

Our mother, who was born with a heart condition, was advised by her family doctor, not to take up the harsh, rugged rural life of homesteading. Our father, urban raised, had no agricultural knowledge, yet the spirit of youth and adventure outweighed all negative advice. They eagerly embarked on a venture into a new country.

Thomas J. LaValley, son of Joseph and Albina (Deau) LaValley, was born on June 15, 1894, in



Standing left to right: Roger, Allie (Patterson), Irene (Michaud), and Fuzz (Vernon). Seated: Lorna (Nellis), Tom and Nellie LaValley.

Marinette, Wisconsin. As a young lad, he moved, with his parents, to International Falls, Minn. He attended school there and while in his teens became employed for the next six or seven years in the Falls papermill.

Our mother, Elizabeth Helen Baker, daughter of Joseph and Mary (Carson) Baker, was the first white child born in the Koochiching county. The homestead, her birthplace, is now part of the city of International Falls. On July 1st, 1914, at eighteen years of age, she married Tom LaValley. Three years later, lured by news of the great Peace River farming country, they, with Pat and Lucy Rooney, left Minnesota to find homesteads in the Grande Prairie area. They arrived in the spring of 1917.

The two couples settled in the town of Grande Prairie, where the husbands became employed as a carpenter and butcher. That September, the 25th, Ilene was born to Lucy and Pat and on November 24th, I was born to Nellie and Tom. Dr. Higgbee helped with both deliveries.

The following spring, after Tom and Pat took out homesteads in the Rio Grande districts, the families moved to their new homes. During their short stay there, they became close friends of the Cages, O'Connells, Sculleys and other young couples of this region. Instead of proving up, they returned to work and live in Grande Prairie.

Daddy drove a dray outfit for Alex Wishart. Years later, he used to recall how his dray became am ambulance, and sometimes served as a hearse, during the flu epidemic. Kindly help and neighborliness, saved many lives of flu stricken families in the fledgling town.

My brother, Roger Edward, was born on April 6, 1919. That same spring, father searched for a quarter in the Bezanson area. He filed on the N.E. 23-72-3 W6th. For the next four years, our family resided in town, while Dad cleared and broke land, and built a frame house and log barn, during the following springs and summer months. He would return to work, each fall and winter, in Grande Prairie.

One June, while our mother was helping on the new farm, Dad had to make a fast ride to Bezanson, to fetch Dr. Labbiddie. The doctor delivered our sister, Lorna Jeanne, on June 13th, 1921, for the small fee of ten dollars. She was the only child born on our homestead. Irene was born on May 11th, 1922; and the next March, the family took up permanent residence on the farm.

The Edson Trail meandered through the farm and curved around the foot of the knoll, just below our home. This site was an old landmark known to the early travelers as 'Dead Bull Hill'. Here, about 1909, a faithful oxen died with his shoes on. As little tots, we used to sit on that big, bleached skull, with its massive horns, and rock back and forth in the warm sunshine. His worn shoes were kept as souvenirs.

That same March, our baby sister entered the old Grande Prairie hospital, under the care of Dr. L. J. O'Brien, for operations and bone grafting. There, she remained for three years, before her transfer to the University Hospital, in Edmonton, for another three years.

In the succeeding winters, our father worked at the Buffalo Lake lumber camp, on the docks in Vancouver, and later, at Fitzpatricks lumbermill and various other bush camps.

Vernon (Fuzz) was born on October 1, 1924. The following years were good. Crops were above average; Dad raised cattle, hogs, chickens and garden produce for our own requirements. He was able to spend more time at home on the farm.

We children learned the three R's at the Lindsay school, but it was our parents who taught us to see and appreciate the beauty of each season.

The green birth of spring, with its melody of bird songs, was our favorite. In wide-eyed wonder, we'd watch the protective love of a mare for her awkward newborn; a cow's concern for her frolicking calf. We wondered how that fidgety, old, clucking, Rhode Island, with her ten identical chicks, could possibly know that one was being held in quiet captivity between a little pair of warm hands. Without help, we solved this mystery. "The old dumb Cluck could count."

Spring blended into languid, wildrose-scented days of summer. We loved the clean, earthy smell of a bright rain-washed morning, and the delightful sensation of cool mud oozing up between small bare toes. What farm child can forget the heady aroma of new-mown hay or the freshly cut grain fields of late August? The wild saskatoon shrubs, laden with lucious purple berries, brought joy to the heart and sometimes an ache to little stomachs.

Fall turned our valley into a vivid splash of colors.

Harvest was a very busy, exciting season. Then, the haunting call of the wild geese winging south, seemed to strike a melancholy cord within us. Chill winds rustled the tall, dead grass and moaned through the naked bluffs. Our world grew grey and desolate. November's snow would drift down to blanket the barren scene and once again, bright and beautiful was our Valley. The Indian legend of the Northern lights, bewitched us, and every season had its own breath-taking beauty of our Peace River sunsets.

By our parents example, we learned to respect our elders and the rights of others; the duty to help others in need of help, understanding or friendship. Our district was an ethnic community. We were taught the richness of other languages, customs and creeds, and the wrongs of racial and religious prejudice.

In our tender years, during winter evenings, after we were tucked in bed, our folks would read to us. Some stories we enjoyed were: Uncle Tom's Cabin, Little Women, Call of the Wild, and many others. This three-fold ritual created a zest for reading in us. Story-time was a sneaky way to make their naive offspring eager to get to bed, and it always worked as a natural tranquilizer on the tired brood.

Childhood days were happy and filled with work, play, daydreams, and adventure. One episode, that still brings a chuckle, was a raid on bedbugs. The folks tried 'saffo' and another ineffective spray, but the infestation grew. Some friends advised burning sulphur or fumigation. The 'Country Guide' said, intense heat for eight hours, would do the job. Daddy decided on all three methods. On the first warm day of April, all household effects, with the exception of the two stoves, landed out in the yard to be scoured, disinfected, scrubbed and washed with coal oil, lysol, hot water and lye soap. Our father ripped the heavy building paper off all the walls and ceilings, to expose the lathe-lined interior. Into pails of sand, he set cans sulphur, while a wash boiler of water was heating on the cookstove. As soon as the water boiled, he dumped in two cups of formaldehyde, then lit up the sulphur pots, and the ritual began. When it came time to refuel the fires, he grabbed an armful of wood, and plunged into the house. Seconds later, he came flying out, swearing and coughing, with tears pouring down his burning face. This wild performance sent us young ones into fits of laughter, but, somehow, Daddy failed to see the joke.

Another incident, that is vivid in my memory, concerned one of my attempts to be 'one of the boys'. Bohdan came over to show Roger his secret discovery, and, reluctantly, they let me tag along. We hiked east of Tom Burt's dwelling till we reached the rim of the river bank. Not knowing what to expect, we lay on our stomachs and peered down. On a sandy ledge 10 feet below us, half drugged from winter's hibernation, hundreds of snakes lay writhing and coiling in the sun. In a flash, I was gazing into the mouth of Hell. In sheer terror, I leapt up and ran. How those two rascals howled with laughter at my 'sissy' reaction.

The whole family liked to sing and harmonize. Three of the family learned to play the guitar and harmonica. Harry Shin, impressed by Roger's ability, presented the lad with a violin. Oh! the fiendish sounds that this tortured instrument made. Dad, hastily built a bunkhouse, parked it 200 yards from the house, and here Brother learned to play the fiddle. A few years later, a proud father would grin, when our old house vibrated with real hoedown music.

Discipline was meted out in a quiet, firm, but gentle manner. Bad language or back-talk got the 'soap-in-the-mouth' treatment. Disobedient little sinners were sent to bed to suffer through the three phases of anger, self-pity and a shame-faced humiliation. For quarreling, the culprit in disgrace, was plunked down on a chair to keep silent for a half-hour. And believe me, a peppery, redhead learned self-control the hard way!

Both our parents always took an active part in community events; church, school and various other activities.

When the 'Thirties' came, our father, due to mammoth doctor and hospital bills, cashed in his life insurance and also mortgaged the farm to this company, on a crop sharing basis, against this debt. One bad, wet fall, we were threatened with foreclosure, but thanks to the new Social Credit government's 'Moratorium bill', we were saved from eviction. It took sixteen years of privation, work and two good crops of high-priced rye in the mid-forties to pay off that miserable mortgage!

Dad worked at lumber mills in the winter, at road work and for other farmers during the summers, for extra income. For two years, he worked for the U.S.E.D. on the Alaska Highway. As each one of us got married and took up farming, our parents helped in numerous ways to get us started.

In their mid-fifties, their work on earth was done; Daddy passed away on October 13, 1949, while still a young man of 56. After three years of ill health, Mom followed on March 6, 1953, at 57 years of age.

This story is not unique, for much the same can be told of all the homesteading parents of our community. Their lives were a great success. The vast courage, self-sacrifice, toil and love of these wonderful pioneer parents, recorded in this book, should bring a deep sense of pride to their descendants, for generations to come.

ROGER AND EMILY LaVALLEY AND FAMILY

Roger was born on April 6th, 1919; the eldest son of Tom and Nellie LaValley. He, Cal Mireault and Ray Fair, spent hours playing with a cub bear, on the Calliou farm. The boys would climb a pole they had leaned against a building, and as often as not, the cub would reach the top at the same time. The cub proved to be a good boxing partner too. The bear spent that winter hibernating in the cellar, but by spring, he was too much for the boys and had to be sent to the Clagary Zoo.

After finishing school at Lindsay, and since work was scarce, Roger spent most of his youth helping the family at home, and some time working for neighbors, Nels McLaughlin and Jack Connell. One summer, he spent a few months with the forestry, fighting fires at Blueberry Mountain.

After two months basic Army training, in Grande Prairie, Roger and Ross Ford, went out to Edmonton and, in 1940-1, they joined the Royal Canadian Air



The Roger LaValley family. L. to R.: Gregg, Grant, Arne. Centre: Duane, Rosalie, Roger. Front row: Mona, Judy, Emily and Mark.

Force. Roger got his training in Canada, and spent the next four years on the Continent.

Upon receiving his discharge in April of 1946, in Calgary, he and Jack Ross, an airforce buddy, spent the summer cowboying around Pincher Creek. He and Jack joined with Bohdan Hawryluk, Frank Kochalyk and Bob Fenton to kick off the first unrecorded Bezanson stampede.

Once again, he joined the Fords orchestra, which supplied music for various communities, at $2.00 a

night a piece. During this time, he met Emily Marek, whom he married on July 23, 1948.

Emily was born in Sexsmith, in 1922, and moved, with her family, to the Twilight district, in 1928. As a child, she enjoyed the Christmas concerts, annual school picnics and ball games.

After finishing grade 9 at Twilight, she took her high school at St. Joseph's, in Grande Prairie. During these years, she played on the Twilight Lady's softball team.

In 1942, Emily joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (W.D.), and was stationed at Ottawa, Trenton, Ontario, Comox and Vancouver, B.C. During the war, in 1945, she hitchhiked from Vancouver, down the west coast of the U.S. to Mexico, through Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Montana, to Calgary, where she was discharged on VE day. The American people were very good to the service personnel. One family claimed her for three days and wouldn't let her pay for food or lodging. As she passed through California, the driver informed her that Pasadena was where Herman Trelle, the World Wheat King, from Wembley, Alta., was killed. Not only did Em thumb her way in cars, but she was able to hitch a ride in a Dakota aircraft flying out of Vancouver, to Grande Prairie. She also went to visit her brother, Robert at Whitehorse, when an aircraft, carrying freight, found room for her as a passenger.



Emily (Marek) LaValley with her taxi.

Upon her discharge, she returned to Grande Prairie, and in December of 1945, started the first woman-owned-and-operated taxi business, in Canada. It was known as Marek's Taxi. She was really surprised, when Jim Morken, brought a copy of the Service magazine The Maple Leaf, which was printed in London, England, to see a write-up about her taxi business.



Guess who's coming to dinner.

She thrilled to the challenge of driving through blizzards and deep snow in winter, and the 'Peace River Mud' in spring and summer. She recalls one bad trip to Edmonton, one spring, when the hi-way from Crooked Creek on, was a dirt road and she had to put the chains on to get through. One of her passengers kindly volunteered to drive on to Valleyview, as she was wet and covered with mud from head to foot.

At that time, a bush pilot, with a float equipped plane, would land on Lake Saskatoon to pick up big-game hunters and supplies. As there was no telephone at the lake, he would circle Grande Prairie to signal Marek's Taxi. Emily would bring him in to town, where he collected his passengers. Then she would drive them back to the Lake.

Some of Emily's most enjoyable trips were those when Roger LaValley was a passenger. This soon ended Emily's taxi career, when she became engaged to, and married Roger. That same year, Roger and Em had their first home moved, from Hythe, onto the N.E. 19-72-2 W6th, at Bezanson. This was the old Porier place. Moving the house met with objection from the Department of Highways and Transport, but thanks to the aid of the Canadian Legion, Roger and Emily obtained permission to proceed with the moving. The heat from the old air-tight kept the chill out of the house during the winter days, but it got awful cool at night and, by early morning, the water in the reservoir of the wood cook-stove would be frozen.

Winter travel, in the first years, was limited to a monthly trip to the store, at Bezanson, which Roger would make with the team and sleigh. However, summers were a marked improvement, as they had a 1947 Dodge, car.

Each of the first three years was marked with the birth of a baby; Duane, born on April 23, 1949, Arne, born on July 3, 1950, and Mona, born on December 25, 1951. The next two years of summer fallow paid off in double production. On March 8th, 1954 twin boys were born; Gregg and Grant. Two girls followed: Rosalie was born on November 14, 1957 and Judy, born on July 8th, 1962. One more blessing was yet to come; a boy named Mark, born on February 29, 1964. Eight children, who became lots of help, playmates, sparring partners; a ball team in itself, and all the other wonderful things that come with being part of a large family.

THE LaVALLEY CLAN — as told by the Family

As kids, our teepees, cabins, bear den, swimming, horse-back riding, etc., provided for our fun. Summer time was also spent learning and appreciating the nature that surrounded us there, on the banks of the Smoky river. Winter months were filled with skating, skiing, flying saucers, igloos and indoor games such as 'Jack in the Dark'. In the evening, we often crowded around Dad to make our requests as he sang and played the guitar or fiddle, while Mom, if we had the peanuts, would make us a batch of peanut brittle.

Some of our more treasured memories were those of when Dad would make us sling-shots or whistles. Or when we'd get together with the neighbor kids. Or when Dad would come home with brand new Indian moccasins for us.

Dad provided us with lots of wild meat and the milk cow was kept busy supplying milk, cream, butter and cottage cheese. Mom's big gardens, quarts of preserves and homemade clothes, were always welcome and left her time for little else. She made most of our clothes, throughout our growing years.

Christmas was always a happy time for us, with the usual family celebrations and feasting.

When Duane started school, he attended the one-room Legion hut, and walked about 2½ miles to catch the bus. Once there were more of us going to school, we thought up many excuses and more ways for missing the bus.

In 1964, the folks acquired the Lloyd Nellis farm and we lived for four years, in the log house built in 1916, by the Callious.

Though Mom and Dad had eight children of their own, they found room for extras. Don McArthur spent four years with us while attending school, and Richard Boe made our place his home away from home.

With the house full of teenagers, we provided our own dance music, as most of the family played some instrument.

Since the time that Dad and Mom started farming on that quarter section with horses, and one milk cow, their farm has expanded to many more acres, a large herd of beef cattle and modern machinery. The farm house now is one with modern conveniences.

However, we still agree that we enjoyed life most, without these so-called conveniences, when we had to haul the wood in and the ashes out.

At present, we still get together to help with the twice-yearly cattle drive. We drive the herd, new calves and all, about 55 miles to the grazing lease across the Smoky and Puskwaskau rivers. After this three or four day cattle-drive, there are a few weary cowhands and saddle ponies.

On November 18, 1974 Dad passed away. We were deeply saddened, but are forever grateful for having had the chance for making and sharing beautiful memories.

Judy, Mark and Mom are still on the farm and, being a close-knit family, the older children are around to do the farming and help with whatever else needs doing.

Judy and Mark are attending St. Mary's School in Sexsmith. Judy is taking grade 9, and Mark is taking grade 7. He enjoys farm animals and spends a lot of time riding horseback as well as looking after his 4H calf. Judy had done well in her sewing class, music and enjoys creative writing, and like most other 15 year old girls, she has natural teenage interests.



Bonny and Duane LaValley holding Tammy, Roger and Tyler.



Arne and Elaine LaValley with children — Jesse, Travis and Brandy Jo.

At the age of 16, Duane took on the responsibility of life, by working for $1.50 an hour, in a bush camp. He,

then, went from operating a small buggy in the Grande Prairie area, to operating a bucket wheel, standing 120' tall and weighing 17,000 tons, at Fort McMurray.

In 1970, he married Cathy Duffy, from Dimsdale. In 1972, they moved from Ft. McMurray, to Bezanson, where Tammy was born. After Cathy passed away, Duane worked for Lobe Const. at Destruction Bay, and that winter, helped his Dad on the farm. The next year, he returned to work for Lobe at Toad River, B.C. That summer, he barely escaped drowning. Thanks to two working buddies, Guy Spencer and Ron Lavulette, who saved his life. Later that year, he married Bonnie, daughter of Neil and Betty McLaughlin. Duane and Bonnie now reside in Bezanson, with their daughter Tammy and sons, Roger and Tyler.

Arne boasts that his first job earned $2 a week. When Dad and Duane went to work in the bush, they each paid him $1. At the age of 14, he had to get up at 5 a.m. to feed the cattle, open waterholes, and milk, before he went to school. His next jobs were: summer employment, at Imperial Lumber and Steel Industries, while he was finishing high school. In 1969, he started operating heavy equipment for Park Brothers. In the years that followed, he continued operating heavy equipment for them and various other outfits; making good money and spending it on a good time.

Girls were never a serious part of this guy's life. Therefore, it was quite a surprise, to everyone, when, after only 5 months of seeing a city girl, Elaine Day, he married her. They were married on July 31, 1971 and, for the next two years, they worked toward buying land of their own. They finally acquired the old Joe Beattie quarter from Bohdan Hawryluk. They, and their son, Jesse, who was 1½ years old at the time,



Gregg LaValley.



Grant and Bernice LaValley.

moved a home from town, and got settled on their quarter, in the spring of 1974.

In 1975, their second son Travis, was born. A daughter, Brandy, was born in 1976.

They now live, comfortably, in their country home, looking forward to re-creating their happy childhood memories for their children. A good way to begin!

For Mona, as a teenager in school, the weekend was the time she looked forward to the most, with a local Saturday night dance. On weekends, when there wasn't a dance, a dozen or so kids would get together at home and dance to music supplied by the family, or have a party at 'Cascade Meadows'. After graduating from St. Joe's Jr.,Sr. high school, in Grande Prairie, with a business course, she was employed in Grande Prairie at several jobs. Of these, she enjoyed her job



Mona and Dennis Morrison holding Chad and Cody.

at the Canada Manpower Centre the most. Her travel was limited to a short trip to Kelowna, to visit the Rooney's, and a trip to Vermilion.

In 1969 and 1970, much of Mona's time was taken up by Dennis Morrison, formerly of Sexsmith. Following their winter wedding, in 1971, they moved a mobile home onto their land north of Goodwin, where Dennis had homesteaded 8 years earlier.

For the first 4 years of marriage, they continued their jobs in Grande Prairie, driving 50 miles to work. In the evenings and on weekends, they spent enjoyable hours together on the land, near nature, baling, fencing, checking cattle or playing doctor if a heifer was having trouble calving. Her time spent outdoors lessened after the birth of their sons, Chad and Cody. She was now able to take time for sewing, making moccasins, etc., and playing bass guitar to accompany Dennis when he played guitar. Clifford Cardinal stayed with them, for almost a year, as a foster child and returns to visit them and the farm animals.



Elden, Rosalie and Carmen Cissell.



Trevor and Laura LaValley, children of Grant and Bernice.



Gregg and Grant making music.

The winters that Dennis wasn't employed off the farm, they would spend getting out rails or fence posts, from south of Goodwin. They also, got out logs for their new log house, which they plan to build to replace their trailer.

Gregg saved his first hard-earned money from collecting beer bottles, and went together with his twin brother, Grant, to buy an old car which they called 'the white Louse'. The boys made sure they had lots of passengers along, for more time was spent pushing than riding.

Gregg finished grade 12, at the Grande Prairie Composite High school, with three years of carpentry. He, later, worked on the construction of the Town Centre Mall and the Rec-Plex, in Grande Prairie. He also worked for the Department of Highways throughout the Peace River Block and for 'Whistle Trenching', in Grande Prairie. During this time, and the time he spent working on a dairy farm in Beaverlodge, Gregg wrote words and music for many songs. He now, plays in a band. Gregg's other hobbies are hunting, fishing and training horses.

Grant took a course in Mechanics in high school. He finished grade 12, in 1973. He claims his high school years were the best years of his life, but who wouldn't, after all, a dark haired 'Doll', named Bernice, was attending school at the same time. After their marriage in the fall of 1973, he and Bernice settled on the family farm, where they began remodeling their home.

Grants interest in music began at the age of 9, when

he learned guitar and harmonica. This interest continued and grew. He, now, plays fiddle for the 'Westernairs' band. Grant and Bernice like the simple way of life. They take time to enjoy harnessing the horses to their homemade buggy or caboose and going for rides with their daughter, Laura, age 3, and son, Trevor, age 9 months.

Rosalies first job was cleaning the three upstairs bedrooms for 25 cents a month. She became self-employed at an early age, when she, Judy and Mark, raised chickens. This turned out to be more of an experience than profitable, as the pigs ate the chickens. Rosalie joined the local 4H beef club in 1971. Her calf weighed 940 lbs. at market time and sold for 33 cents per lb. Rosalie had her eye on a certain fellow, when she was in grade 7, but he didn't take note until several years later. Then, in 1974, she married him, Elden Cissell, of Bezanson. Her story is continued under the Cissell name.

VERNON (FUZZ) LaVALLEY — by Lorna (LaValley) Dahl

Dad was born on October 1st, 1924, at Grande Prairie. He was the youngest child of Tom and Nellie LaValley, of Bezanson.

He, and the other four LaValley children (Allie, Roger, Lorna and Irene), went to school at Lindsay. Although he wasn't especially fond of school, Dad spent many extra hours there; teaching himself to play the piano. The family didn't have one, so he would walk over to the school, at every opportunity, and plunk away until he eventually arrived at the tune he wanted to play.

When Dad was about seven or eight, he took up acting. He, and the other children, were playing, when Dad decided to get up "on stage" and dance. He got up on a bench and was happily twisting and twirling about, when he got a little too vigorous and bumped his back-side right through the window! Needless to say, that was the end of his acting for that day.

Dad was always getting into something when he was small. There was another time when he managed to get in the way of a slop-pail, and got hit on the head with it. Before he could burst into tears at the sight of the blood, his sister, Lorna, convinced him that it was just part of the contents of the pail, so, it was a calm, smiling boy that walked into the house to get cleaned up.



Lorna, Ellen, Joseph and Vernon (Fuzz) LaValley.

Dad joined Ford's orchestra when he was about eighteen. He played the piano quite well by this time. In all the hours he had spent at the school, he had learned to play, by ear, and had developed a style of his own.

After his father's death in 1949, Dad farmed, in partnership, with his mother, until her death in 1953.

When John and Joyce Ford were married, Joyce, a school friend of my mother's, seated Mom beside Dad at their reception. She told my mother that she had "seated her beside an eligible bachelor." Evidently, this time, the "best laid plans", worked!

Mom, formerly Ellen Wood, who was a stenographer at the Royal Bank in Grande Prairie, quit work and married Dad, on August 27, 1954. They lived, at Bezanson, on the quarter which was the original 'LaValley' homestead.

I was born on August 15, 1955. They named me 'Lorna Mae', after Dad's sister. Mom had worked outside, pulling roots and fencing, right up until she had me. I think this is part of the reason I have always been so healthy.

We didn't have electricity, telephone or running water when we lived at Bezanson. So we used the traditional coal oil lamps, and bathed in a galvanized wash tub.

On one such occasion, on a Sunday afternoon, Dad had had his bath and Mom was in the tub, when Dad looked out the window and saw a bear standing in the yard. Dad, attired in his shorts, and Mom, in a bath-towel, ran out to see where it had gone, only to meet it face-to-face, coming around a willow clump. Dad, being easily excited, grabbed the first thing within reach to chase the bear with. As it happened, Mom's bath-towel was the closest thing at hand; Dad grabbed it from around her and ran after the bear swinging the towel as he went. Mom was left standing, dripping wet, with nothing, but the sunshine, for cover. Minutes later, Allie and Bud Patterson came into the yard, just "bearly" missing the "story of the three 'bares'!"

Another time, a bear came into the porch in the middle of the night. It was a very dark night, with pouring rain. Mom and Dad had been asleep until the bear knocked over a pail of milk. Mom woke, and heard water running, and a spooky, clanging noise coming from the porch. Dad took the flashlight and went, tip-toeing, out to see what the noise was. When he opened the door, all he could see was a big furry form, hesitating in the doorway. He was so startled, that he kicked, without stopping to think. At the same time as his bare foot connected with the bear's behind, he yelled, hoarsely, "Get to hell out of here!" The bear did get out in a hurry, but the more Dad thought about what it could have done, the more foolish he felt. He remembered the feel of the bear-hair between his toes, for the rest of his life. It sent shivers down his spine every time he thought of it.

Dad always enjoyed joining in when the community had its St. Patrick's Day program. A group of people, headed by my aunt Allie, would get together and put on a two-hour program of plays, songs and skits. They must have been quite good at it, because I was impressed enough to remember some parts of it, and I was only four years old at the time.

In the fall of 1960, Dad bought Granddad Wood's quarter, and we moved, house and all, to the Lake Saskatoon area, west of Grande Prairie. (Harvey Weegar bought the quarter at Bezanson).

Dad worked, for a short time, as an orderly, at Central Park Lodge, in Grande Prairie. However, for the most part, he farmed.

My brother, Joe, was born on September 11, 1968. Dad had always told people that he and Mom weren't going to have any more family until they had put me through school. He had said this in jest, never once believing that it would actually, almost, turn out that way.

I remember one day when Dad was trying to get some cows in the barn, and was having difficulty getting them to go the right way. This was about three weeks before Joe was born, so Mom was standing back a bit, ready to herd them into the barn. Dad got disgusted with one cow, so he set the dog on her. Of course, he hadn't stopped to think that Mom was standing right in the path that the cow was likely to take. Mom, who was rather big and scared as well, couldn't move. She stood still as the cow, with the dog at her heels, raced by. It was all kind of terrifying at the time, but once it was over and she was none-the-worse-for-wear, it was quite hilarious.

Dad had a severe heart attack in the winter of 1973, and spent a great deal of time in the hospital, as a result.

After Dad was incapacitated by his heart condition, he put his artistic talents to good use. He took egg decorating, as well as basket weaving, courses. We have several samples of his work with each. We also have several poems that Dad wrote, which reflect his own personality.

Dad was home to give me away, in August of 1974, when I married Robert Dahl, of Halcourt. We bought Aunt Allie's house and moved it, from Bezanson, to the home quarter at Lake Saskatoon.

In May of 1975, Dad passed away, after having undergone by-pass surgery on his heart, at the University Hospital, in Edmonton. He had been in-and-out of the hospital quite frequently, with a variety of illnesses, for the five years prior to the heart operation.

My husband, Rob, farms the quarter and works at the Alberta Wheat Pool elevator, in Sexsmith.

On August 14, 1976, Mom married Gavin Craig, long-time friend of the family. He works for the Fish and Wildlife, in Grande Prairie. They and Joe, live on the farm.

Our daughter, Erin, was born on February 3, 1977.

THE BIG SLOUGH — by Vernon (Fuzz) LaValley

Let's head for the raft this morning,
While the sun's not too hot and the wind is still down.
And watch the black Tern go soaring,
Hover, then circle around.

Climb on, be careful, no mishaps,
'Cause the water's quite deep and we can't start out wet.
We'll head to the north on our first lap,
Heave-ho! whenever you're set.

There's a duck's nest out there in that willow,
She's off, so let's pole to the edge of the crown.
See the eggs set in the stuffing from pillows,
But from her breast she has plucked all that down.

See that Coot or 'Hell Diver', some call them,
With his black shiny feathers and an eye like a star,
He's dove to the bottom and now then!,
Maybe he did dive that far!

Pole on to that nest in the cattails,
And we'll see if the Redwing has laid her full batch,
Identical eggs to last detail,
I wonder, will all of them hatch?

Toward shore where the slough grass grows shorter,
There's a rat sitting up on his last winter's hut,
There he goes! He's headed for water.
Look quick or you'll just glimpse the butt!

Oh! there's lots of new life to discover,
As we go rafting 'round our tree ringed 'Big Slough',
And answers to mysteries we'll uncover,
So I'll go again, how about you?

ANGUS McEACHERN

Angus McEachern was a rather quiet Scot, who came to the district in 1920, and homesteaded the N.W. 27-72-3 W6th. Nels McLaughlin lived with Angus for a short time. When a young couple, Mr. and Mrs. Horrigan, arrived in the district, Mr. McEachern made them welcome by offering them lodging at his cabin until they found a place of their own. This worked out beautifully for the two bachelors; Mrs. Horrigan was an excellent cook.

Nels recalls, while he and Angus were working in the yard one day, a blood curdling scream split the air. Both men raced for the house to find Mrs. Horrigan, up on a chair, still screaming and pointing toward the cook stove. Out from under the stove slithered a large garter snake. The poor girl, who had just emigrated from Ireland, had never seen a snake before that day.

The Horrigans homesteaded north of Kleskun Lake ranch, in the area of Fitzpatricks' sawmill.

Mr. McEachern sold his farm to Oscar Regneir and left the district.

HATTIE McFADZEN

I was born in St. Cloud, Minnesota, down by the Mississippi River, January 2nd, 1894, weighing 2½ pounds. My mother told me, they put me in a cigar box and shut the lid. She said she could turn a cup up side down over my head, so I was some "runt"! They wouldn't let me go to school until I was eight years old, because I was too small.

I was in grade eight when I left school, at Christmas time, to work on the mangle in the laundry. I liked it very much and got nine dollars a week.

Dad moved a lot until we came up here, to Canada. Then we weren't able to move any more, for lack of funds. He moved from Minnesota to North Dakota, Montana, Wisconsin; but always came back to Minnesota.



Back row, left to right: Hattie, Stella and Mabel. Thelma and Lillian seated.

We lived in Bemidji, but seventeen of us left, my sisters' Mrs. Jerome Nortons' place in Nymore, Minnesota, on the 26th of March 1917. We crossed the Canadian border at Emerson on March 27, which was my Dad's and my brother Ernie's, birthday. There were Dad and Mom, my sister Stella, and her husband, Moose Nellis. My brother Ed, and his wife, Florence. My brother, Irving, and his wife, Catherine. My brother, Roy, who joined the army the next year and was sent to England. And besides myself, there were my brother, Ernie, sister Mable, my adopted brother, Alex Robideau, and Stella's four children, Myrtle, Orval, Ted and Lloyd Nellis. We landed in Grande Prairie on April 3rd, 1917. There was water all around up high as the high side walkway, up as far as Woolworths' from the depot. We stayed at the immigration hall one night, in Winnipeg and two or three nights in Edmonton waiting for the next train to Grande Prairie. There was only one train a week then. We stayed about three nights and days in Grande Prairie, until the men could find a house to live in. They found a small cottage right across from the Montrose school, that they were just building. It had a front room, a bedroom and a small kitchen, but we got by, sleeping all over the house in corners. We landed in Grande Prairie with only fifteen dollars among all of us. No home, no work and little money, but the men got jobs here and there and I went to work at Clairmont, waiting tables at the MacDonald Hotel. The proprietor heard there were some new people in town, so came in to see if she could



Billie Robideau.

get some help. I got a dollar a day, which helped buy some grub.

About a month later, the family moved to their homesteads at Bezanson. The roads were terrible with mud and water all over. The folks bought a pair of small horses. That was the start of farming. We had a cow, some chickens and a couple of pigs as well. They built Mooses' house out of logs and built Dad's house with the logs upright. We had wood stoves and coaloil lamps for heat and light. We got a walking plow and a couple of axes. We never had drinking water here in our part of the country; we strained slough water in summer and put up ice, for drinking, in winter, but it didn't last long.

The kids got married and all lived right around Bezanson or nearby.

For entertainment we played cards and went to dances, which started about eight and ended at seven or eight in the morning. We hardly ever sat down; the music just would switch tunes, and we would switch partners, and keep on dancing. We danced 23 dances every night. They were: — waltz, waltz quadrille, two step, half step, Jersy, one step, three step, four step, seven step, log cabin, scotch reel, Baltimore two step, Robert's two step, French minuette, polka, heel and toe polka, Whiskey reel, cabbage dance, bunny hop, square dance, schottische, and lame duck. We sure had a lot of fun, no liquor either, just a good time. We also went to a lot of picnics. Everybody brought lunch, and played horseshoes, ran races and had a lot of things for kids to do. It really made a nice day; we met all the neighbors and had fun. At dances, at suppertime, we had one hour break, so someone would sing a song or two, give a jig, or tell jokes. By the way, did you hear the one of the two old ladies that roomed together? One said to the other, "There's one thing I'd like to do in this world before I die." "What's that?" "Go streaking." "Well, why don't you?" So she took off all her clothes and marched out in the hall and into the lobby, turned around and marched back. Two old men were sitting in the lobby and one said to the other, "Did you see what that woman had on?" "No, but, what ever it was, it sure the hell needed ironing!"

I had one son, Billie Aubrie, but he is dead now; God bless his soul.

I waited tables for about fifteen years, then I went cooking for mill crews, road crews and Department of Highways for about five years, until my husband died. I got widows assistance from the government. As I could only work for a short time, I decided not to work at all. I didn't like going to work if I couldn't work out the full time. I never dreamed then that, at some time in the near future, I would have all the things I needed and not want for anything, but I am in that position now: Thank God for large mercies!

One time a bunch of us grown ups, went to Sturgeon lake on a lumber wagon. The mosquitoes were in black swarms; we had to make a smudge in the middle of the wagon to keep them down some. They were sure biting little devils!

One time we were at a picnic at the old hall, by Rex Pattersons. The men had a horse race. One of the horses bolted into the crowd, knocking my mother down. She was laid up for quite a while with a broken leg.

Ed's son, Bert, was the first one to die with diphtheria. The rest all lived for a long time. But, in the last sixty years since I have lived up here, I've lost seven brothers, two sisters, and Dad and Mother.

One of our neighbors burned out and the community had a benefit dance. Everybody brought something for them to get started again. They were good around here like that.

I love it up here in Bezanson and I don't want to go anywhere else.

THE MAC McLAUGHLINS

Nelson McLaughlin, (better known as Mac), was born in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, on Euston Street at the foot of Gallows Hill, on June 26, 1895. An Imperial Oil Station now stands there. (In the early days, a man was hanged at the top of this hill, thus the name 'Gallows Hill' remains to this day.)

In 1900, when Mac was 5 years old, his parents and family moved to the family farm, at Clyde River, where he grew up. After World War I broke out, he joined the '105th Prince Edward Highlanders' and, after a few months' training, went overseas. He always says 13 is his lucky number as he left Canada on Friday, the 13th, and they were 13 days crossing the Atlantic.

Being aboard the Empress of Britain was an experience in itself. "During peace time, the F deck was always allotted to cattle. However, that became our home during those 13 days crossing the water. The blankets that the troops were issued were almost crawling, so we were 'lousy soldiers' to say the least. Besides, to provide air to the F deck, two funnels were constructed, but one was not in operation, so most of our time was spent on the upper decks getting fresh air. You may be sure, too, that when the first call for morning duty came we were out of bed, for in a few minutes, the deck was deluged for its morning wash.

In contrast, we arrived home, in 6 days, aboard the luxurious Olympic."

After training in England for some time, their regiment was broken up. Mac was drafted to the 26th New Brunswick regiment in France, and later joined the 2nd Machine Gun Battalion in which he served until the end of the war. He served with the 'Army of Occupation', in Germany, in a town called Troisdorf, across the Rhine. He had his Christmas dinner in Germany. Then his leave came through, and he was able to have his New Year's dinner in Glasgow, Scotland. After months of waiting, in Belgium and England, he arrived home, after receiving his discharge, in May of 1919.

In August of 1920, he came west to Grenfell, Sask., where he spent two years with his brothers, Ira and Louis. In June of 1922, he arrived in Grande Prairie,



Front row, left to right: Lorena, Donald and Jack McLaughlin. Back row, left to right: Mr. and Mrs. Mac and Gerald McLaughlin.



Left to right: Donald, Gerald, Lorena and Jack McLaughlin.

and later that year, he homesteaded in Bezanson, where he still resides.

On June 15, 1927, Mac took, as his bride, Blanche Moody. They raised their four children; Gerald, Lorena, Donald and Jack, in Bezanson during the 'hungry thirties'. They all attended the Lindsay School and later, Gerald, Lorena and Donald attended high school in Grande Prairie.

During World War II, Mac joined the army again and served with the army training centre, in Grande Prairie, and the Veterans' Guard of Canada. His wife, Blanche, and the children remained on the farm, to which Mac returned following his discharge.

Gerald now resides in Bezanson and commutes to Grande Prairie, where he works as a heavy duty mechanic for R. Angus.

After Lorena left high school, she worked in the Treasury Branch, in Grande Prairie. It was while she was there that she met Don Snydmiller, from Debolt. On July 13, 1956, they were married, in Grande Prairie, and had a reception at Debolt, followed by a dance in Bezanson. They had four children; Judy, Brian, Stewart and Jason. They are, at present, residing in Aberdeen, Scotland. Don is working for Peter Bawden Drilling.

After Donald left high school, he worked at Taylor, B.C. and trained as a millwright. It was there that he met Colleen Moody. On July 14, 1961, they were married. They have three children; Donnie, Brenda and Cindy. They are now living in Prince George, B.C. Donald works for Prince George Pulp and Paper.

Jack, the youngest son, divides his time between carpenter work and farming. He met Bonnie McArthur and, on April 7, 1958, they were married. They have four boys; Blaine, Kelley, Brent and Dale. They are residing on the old homestead at Bezanson.

Mac has always played an active role in all the development of the Bezanson district. At the age of 82, he and Blanche, live in comfortable retirement, in Bezanson, and still take an interest in community and political affairs.

PAUL AND ANNIE MENARD

Paul Menard was born on August 6, 1923, at Bezanson; the only son of Zotique and Margaret Menard. Paul took his schooling at the Lindsay School. After finishing school, Paul farmed his father's land while Zotique was in the army. After Paul's dad came home from the army in 1945, Paul went to work for the Department of Highways, and later for Mannix and O'Sullivun, until 1952.

On July 1, 1952, Paul married Annie Gresko, daughter of Henry and Annie Gresko of Bezanson. Shortly after their marriage, Paul and Annie purchased the home place of Zotique Menard and started farming.

Paul and Annie had four children; Margaret, Brian, Randy and Debbie. They all attended school at Bezanson and Sexsmith Schools.

Margaret was born February 5, 1953, in Grande Prairie. After finishing her schooling, Margaret, married Bill Arnold on October 3, 1970, and now resides at Creemore, Ontario. Bill and Margaret have two girls, Vicki born June 25, 1972, and Julie born July 1, 1974.



Back row, left to right: Brian holding niece Vicki Arnold, Annie and Paul Menard. Front row: Margret, Debbie and Randy Menard.

Brian was born September 2, 1954 at Sexsmith, Alberta. After finishing his schooling in Sexsmith, he went to N.A.I.T., and now is a millwright. On October 10, 1975, Brian married Donna Lees of Stettler, Alberta, and have one child, Amy Lynne, born May 27, 1976.

Randy was born July 1, 1960, at Grande Prairie. Randy is still going to school and helps his dad with the farming.

Debbie was born on December 24, 1966, in Edmonton and is still attending school.

Annie Menard was born at Windthurst, Saskatchewan, on February 23, 1933. She came, with her parents, to Alberta in 1935. Annie took her schooling at East Kleskun and Lindsay Schools.

ZOTIQUE MENARD

Zotique Menard was born at Alexandria, in the Glen Gary Country, Ontario on August 14, 1892.

Zotique got his schooling at Alexandra, and Glen Robertson, Ontario. After finishing his schooling, at the age of 21, he left Ontario on a excursion train to come to the Peace River Country. Zotique arrived in Edmonton in 1913. Money was scarce, so he went to work at a coal mine, near Edmonton, for $2.50 a day, and stayed for a year.

In 1914, Zotique left Edmonton by rail as far as the railroad went; that was 25 miles from Pruden's Crossing, now known as Watino. From the end of the rail he walked the 25 miles to Pruden's Crossing and found work on the trussel bridge; the first bridge to be built across the Smoky River. Zotique worked on the bridge until freeze-up, and then returned to Edmonton and joined the army on May 15, 1916.

From Edmonton, during his leave, he came to Grande Prairie, and filed on some land N.W. 24-72-3 west of the sixth. Zotique then returned to Edmonton and went overseas to France.

Zotique was wounded in action in France, so he returned to the Peace River Country, to his homestead, in 1919. In 1921, about the time Zotique was



Mrs. Zotique Menard, Paul and Zotique.

busy brushing his land with an axe and a grubhoe, a young girl, Margaret Chubeu, arrived from Normandy, France, to stay with her sister and brother-in-law, Tom and Susie Rice of Bezanson. A courtship started between Zotique and Margaret, and they were married in 1922.

Zotique's first home was a log shack with a sod roof. The barn was also logs with sod roof. Zotique says that after a 3 day rain, the roofs dripped inside for days.

Mosquitoes were very bad Zotique recalls. There was nothing, in those days, to deter the pests but a smudge. Zotique said he didn't know which was the worse, the smudge or the mosquitoes.

For his drinking water, Zotique dug a hole beside a slough. There were so many wigglers in the water, it always had to be strained.

Zotique's transportation was walking or by team and buggy. Most of the time though, he walked, because the horses needed a rest after working in the field all day. Zotique would walk to the Bezanson Townsite to have the plowshares sharpened. He farmed with horses until 1940, when a new tractor was purchased.

Zotique had another quarter of land, N.W. 7-72-2 west of the sixth, which was his soldier's grant. In 1939, he again joined the army and remained in the service until 1945.

Zotique and Margaret Menard had only one child, Paul Charles, born August 6, 1923. Paul still farms the same farm that Zotique homesteaded.

Margaret Menard passed away on September 23, 1947.

MEXICAN JACK

John Wesley Haverkost, better known as 'Mexican Jack', was born, of Spanish and German descent, in the state of Nevada, about the year, 1852. He was a very colorful man, that arrived in Bezanson, in 1921, from Dawson City, Yukon. His exploits took him from the old days of the American West, through the Riel Rebellion, to the gold rush of the Yukon, of 1898. As he recounted his interesting experiences to the younger



Mexican Jack (Havercost) moose hunting on the Smoky River.

generation, he left them very much impressed, as they still like to repeat those tales.

At the early age of sixteen or seventeen, he was known as a good horse wrangler and cowpuncher. He took part in the first cattle drive from Texas, to Abilene, Kansas, on the old Chisholm Trail. When the Riel Rebellion broke out in Canada, he came north to join it. He met, and married, an Icelandic girl in Winnipeg, and settled down for a few years. He became the father of 5 children; three girls and two boys. However, when the new gold rush in the Yukon loomed on the horizon, he got restless again. Mexican Jack left, on the Trail of 1898, to make his fortune, in the rugged wilds of the land of the midnight sun. Like many others, he failed to make that fortune, and left Dawson City, to come to the Peace River, in 1921. He stayed for a while with Mr. and Mrs. George Amireaux, whom he had known in the Yukon, for many years.

He worked for different people around the community for a few years. He worked for Bill Moody, for a time, and other cattlemen, putting up hay; he worked for Humpy Currie, across the Smoky river, in about 1923. Jack worked for two years, for a cattleman named Davis, who had a ranch across the Puskwaskau.

In 1926, he went to work for Pat Rooney. While working for Pat, he suddenly became ill and was taken to the Grande Prairie hospital, where he underwent a serious operation. When it came time for him to leave the hospital, Nels McLaughlin brought him home with him to convalesce. He remained there for a number of years. While he stayed with Mac, he applied for his old age pension; one of the first in the Bezanson district to do so.

There was very great difficulty in getting a pension for him as he had lost his birth certificate and all of his records, in a hotel fire in the Yukon. However, they finally obtained a copy of his marriage certificate from Winnipeg. After he got his pension, he moved to the old store building on the Rooney homestead, for he preferred to live alone as he got older; also children bothered him.

He had grown granddaughters who were writing, and urging him to come home. His youngest child, Pete, was between thirty-five and forty, and had never met his father.

Oscar Reginer took him to the train on the 7th of August, 1935, and he went back to join his family. Two years later, in 1937, he passed quietly away, at about the age of 85.

THE ELMER MOODY FAMILY

Our father, Ejlmer Frijmoodig, was born in Dolna, Sweden, on May 17, 1883. At seven years of age, his family moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba. On their arrival in Canada, his parents soon realized that their name was extremely difficult to pronounce, so they had it changed to Moody.

The family stayed in Winnipeg for about two years, then moved to Minneapolis, Minn. Grandfather Moody, a graduate engineer in Sweden, decided to try farming in Northern Wisconsin. It was here that Dad met a young lady, of Scottish-Irish descent, named Gracie Lindsay, daughter of George Lindsay, stonemason and farmer. They were married on July 2, 1908. From this marriage, seven children were born; four girls and three boys, Blanche, Mae, Norma, Florence, Vayne, Forest, and Orton.

For the next ten years, Dad drove streetcars in Minneapolis and worked in sawmills around Northern Wisconsin.

In the U.S.A. in 1918, the flu epidemic was raging. Women were throwing tradition to the wind, finding it stylish to cut their hair short and to smoke cigarettes. Promotions of the Peace River Country, as the land of golden opportunity, had attracted our father, and a friend and neighbor, Arthur Howe. In looking for better advantages for their families, they decided to move to the Peace River country. Mother was to stay behind. Arthur, his wife and their two small children, and our dad, Elmer Moody, accompanied by our Grandfather Lindsay, arrived in Grande Prairie in May of 1918. They acquired three homesteads, quite close together, in what is now the Bezanson district. Dad filed on the N.E. 35-72-3 W6th. Grandfather chose the S.E. 26-72-3 W6th.

A log cabin was built on Art Howe's quarter before Dad and Grandfather Lindsay returned to Wisconsin.

Our brother, Forest, was born while Dad was in Canada. We arrived in Grande Prairie on June 2, 1919. Baby Forest was only nine months old. Mr. and Mrs. Grundforsen and Jenny, their daughter, now Mrs. Pat McNally of Grande Prairie, were on the same train. They were from North Dakota.

Our folks set out on the 21 mile trip to the homestead, by team and wagon, with 6 children and our homestead effects. When we crossed the Red Willow slough, the water was axel deep. We arrived at the homestead, and stayed with the Art Howe family for a few days. This was our introduction to the beautiful Peace River Country, with its panoramic sunsets, and flashing northern lights. Our family soon settled into a new way of life. It was somewhat of a change for our mother, to move from an eight roomed house with hardwood floors throughout, in Wisconsin, to a log cabin, on a bush homestead in Northern Canada. But she took it in her stride. She found many friendly neighbor women to drink tea and swap recipes with.

There were many neighborly acts and helpful deeds in the old homestead days.

The water situation was a drawback then, (as it still is) and sister, Norma, became so ill from poor drinking water, that she was under a doctor's care. We melted snow in the winter. It was soft and clean.

Since Dad was born and raised in the city, he had no previous experience in farming and didn't care for it. He fired boilers on threshing outfits, worked for the Buffalo Lakes Lumber Co., and various other sawmills around, and trapped foxes and coyotes along the river. Red and cross fox pelts brought forty and fifty dollars. Coyote skins sold for twenty-five dollars a piece. Father was quite a man for the wide open spaces.

Many years later, he was the coffee maker for five thousand troops stationed in Seward, Alaska, during World War II.

One August day in 1920, our kindly Grandfather, George Lindsay, quietly passed away, leaving a sorrowing family behind. Interment was in the Glen Leslie cemetery.

The old wood stoves were the centre of the family home. I can still remember the comfy heat from our airtight heater and no heating bill in those days to worry about. The wood cook stove served the purpose of many of our expensive modern day appliances, such as a clothes dryer, baker, sad-iron heater, water heater, and a garbage disposal.

In 1921, Mexican Jack drifted down from the Yukon. He came to our place to help Dad and ended up staying with us. Wherever he hung his hat was home, he said.

The Moody family received their education at the Lindsay school. It was also our place of worship when there were visiting ministers.

Our mother, Grace Moody, assisted in the birth of the children of two neighbors, the year after we arrived there. After that, she became better known, and her services were called for all over the Bezanson district and even beyond. We have no idea how many babies she assisted with in those years. Sometimes, families could get Dr. L. J. O'Brien to come out, but more often he couldn't make it and he would tell her to



The Moody children — 1919. Back row, left to right: Mae and Norma. Front row, left to right: Florence, Blanche holding Forest and Vayne.

do her best. We have seen her, many times, rise from a comfortable bed and go off in to the night, by whatever means of transportation they had — even horseback. She had never had any previous medical training, just a willingness to help where she was needed. She often said the stork travelled in the wee small hours of the morning to do his work.

I expect her most memorable case was when she was called to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Innes. For some reason, she decided that Mrs. Innes should be in the hospital. So they started for Grande Prairie, but by the time they arrived at Moose Nellis's driveway, things had come to a head so rapidly, that they didn't have time to return home. They drove into the Nellis yard. Stella made them welcome, as she always does everybody, and pitched in and helped. The Innes baby was born at the Nellis home.

With the help and encouragement of Mother, we four Moody sisters became a vocal group when we were teenagers. We entertained at dances, parties and sang hymns at church.

My three attractive sisters were all different. Mae had a beautiful soprano voice. She was always singing or laughing. She was a very happy person. As a small girl, when she was angry at Mother, she would threaten to "tip the house over". We've laughed many times over that. She married Marvin Jensen. They live in Grande Prairie. They have two children and two grandchildren.

Norma was more quiet, but still full of fun. She had a real flair for dress making. While working in Grande Prairie, she contributed her lovely voice to the United Church Young Peoples choir.

Florence, the red headed imp, with the cute freckles on her nose, and the twinkle in her blue eyes, was always into some kind of mischief. She was married in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, to Merle Minto. They had one son. She and her son, Lindsay, now live in Vancouver, B.C.

Vayne, our oldest brother, was the best student in our family. We called him the master mind. He had to take things apart to see how they worked. He was married in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, to Adeline Whitmann. They still live there and have two children; Evelyn and Dale.

Our second brother, Forest, left here at the age of thirteen. Neither Mae or myself ever saw him again. He grew up to be a very nice young man, and had intended to return to this country to live.

Orton (Bud) Moody was the only one of us born in Canada. He received his education at the Lindsay, and Grande Prairie High schools. He was raised in Bezanson. After finishing high school, he joined the R.C.A.F. around 1950. While stationed at Moose Jaw, Sask., he met a pretty little dark-eyed girl named Denise Beliele. They were married in August of 1955. They have 4 children; Sheryl, Rick, Robert and Kenneth.

Norma and Forest were deceased, in 1930 and 1935; both at the early age of 18 years.

Mother, passed away at the age of 69, in 1961, and our father in 1964, at the age of 80.

THE MOODY FAMILY

William Moody decided, in 1912, to quit dock working and to take his wife, Harriet, and their four sons to Canada. Upon their arrival from England, they spent a few years in the Vegreville area, then once more packed their belongings and, in 1919, came to the Peace River country. The railroad was new in those days and they waited until the train was passing through a slough so they could pail up water for their cattle. Apparently this train wasn't celebrated for its speed.

Bill took a liking to the flat at the Smoky River, and he and Mrs. Moody took homesteads there. The same Smoky River was to employ him and his son, Reg, for many years to come; from the 1920's until 1949; as each served as pilot of the ferry, which was the only means of crossing the river when it wasn't frozen. Until the building of the bridge in 1949, this spot was known as Moody's Crossing. I have often thought it was a miracle that both of those men didn't get themselves into more difficulties than they did, with testing the ice in the fall, to make sure it was safe to cross on, or ferrying a load in high water. But other than wet feet and the odd dunking, neither could boast of much else.

Charlie has many memories of his Dad's ferry days, when he caused his parent's hearts to skip a beat by crossing the river on horseback, or calling the dog across from the other side. Many times, Reg walked

up and down the old Smoky's hills to put in his shift on the ferry. No wonder he was always so trim. I remember his telling of one incident when he was walking down to go to work at midnight. It was the fall of the year when every step on the fallen leaves gave your location away, and he heard footsteps behind him. He walked for a ways, but each step made him more sure that he was being followed. He got his flashlight ready, and quickly turned and shone it in the face of a beautiful big buck. The deer was as surprised as Reg, and made a hasty retreat. He told us he guessed it took a deer to know a dear. They witnessed a flood in 1935, but seemed to come through unscathed.

If Harriet Moody had once been an English lady, she became very adapted to the life of a homesteader. She delivered a baby or two in her time, and was hostess to a good many people who made it to her stopping house for a hot meal, a bed and care for their horses. Her husband was an only child, and so, in about 1933, her mother-in-law came, from England, to live with them until her death in 1938. Later, she had her sister and brother-in-law very close too, as Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Lloyd became residents of the flat.

Of all the ladies I have known, I dare say that Lily Lloyd had the sweetest disposition of them all. If she had any temper, I don't know when it showed. She was so beautifully happy with her cats and her life in general.

The eldest of the Moody sons was Bob, born in 1900. He spent his adult life as a banker, beginning at Lake Saskatoon, except for a few years when he served with the R.C.A.F., and even then, he was pay clerk so never got too far from banking. He is the father of three children. Shortly after the death of his wife, he decided to retire, and, in 1965, moved here to spend his parents' remaining days with them. He, at present, lives in Nanton, Alberta.

Bill was the second Moody child. He and his wife, Fern, are retired in Victoria. Bill was always a man of varied interests, and just announced that that didn't think he would ride his Honda this year as the traffic is getting a bit much for him. Instead, he will be using his ten-speed more; at 75 years young, who can complain!

Number three son was Reg. He came north with his folks and attended school here, but, as a young man, returned to Edmonton to be employed with Burns, and then Gainer's, packers. He was a lighthearted young man, sprinting along on his motorcycle one day, when he sped through a mud puddle, only to find, to his dismay, that he had splashed a young Dutch lady who was walking down the sidewalk. She was very annoyed, Reg was very apologetic, and need I tell you that, in 1926, the young lady became Mrs. Moody. They lived in Edmonton for a couple of years, and then, with baby Ernest, moved back to take a homestead on the east side of the Smoky. They lived there until Reg's untimely death in 1972. They were always a compatable couple, which was proven by the fact that she only outlived him by eleven months.

The Moodys had two more children in their family; Elsie and Charlie. Elsie is now Mrs. Roy Scott and lives with her husband, at Spirit River. They have six children. In 1950, Ernie married Edith Pryke, who came to Goodwin to teach school. They have a family of four, some of which assist in the farming of Reg's homestead, along with other land they have since acquired.

Charlie married the former Louise Ungstad and they have four children. Carol, who will become Mrs. Brian Bekkeheim, (son of a sturgeon Heights pioneer) this summer; Greg, a member of Bezanson's surging fastball team, and Karen and Paula who are students. In 1975, Charlie purchased the land owned by Bud Gallant for many years. The surveyors are busy at present shaving it down to accommodate a new highway. Oh well, I guess you can't fight progress!

The youngest of the Bill Moody boys is Ron. He inherited the Moody homestead and he, and his wife, Isabelle, lived there until her death in 1960. Isabelle was a school teacher at several schools around, and I'm sure, well remembered by many. They had two children; Gerry, who, with his family lives on the flat, and Sharon, Mrs. Alan Dodd, who makes her home with her family at Edson.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Moody lived long and healthy lives. Mr. Moody died, at age 91, in 1967, and Mrs. Moody died at 89, about six weeks after her husband. They both had said many times, if they had had a choice they would have done the same thing all over again.

ISOBEL HORSELY MOODY

Isobel Horsely came from Calgary, to teach the second year the new school was opened, in the homesteading area of Fitzsimmons. She remained there for the 1932-33, 1933-34 school terms. Since these were the depression years, her salary was only $750 a year. She boarded at Vinets and did love to sleep in in the mornings. The Vinet children often wished that she



Isobel Moody — 1945.

would get up; then there would be something doing, for sure.

In spite of the isolation, mud and mosquitoes, Isobel always had a cheery word for everyone, and a deep understanding of the unavoidable hardships which a new school, in a homestead area, had to face. Right from the beginning, she fit into the community, first as a wonderful teacher and second as a friend to those in need; whether it be the need for clothes or a word of consolation in time of trouble or sorrow. She was a frequent visitor at the Coney home, and became a close friend to Peggy, who recalls Isobel helping her choose her first long dress; a big thing in those days.

To help provide entertainment and 'get togethers', Isobel was instrumental in producing Variety Shows, to say nothing of the Minstrel Shows which will long be associated with her efforts to make the long harsh winters just a little brighter.

Being single and attractive, all the bachelors for miles around vied for her attention, even one 60 year old homesteader baked a cake for her birthday. However, when she met that certain young man from the Smoky River, that was it. Ron Moody made sure Isobel spent the following weekends at the Moody household, even if it meant walking the last few miles to get her and her suitcase. Margaret White can recall the day that Isobel told the students she was leaving Fitzsimmons to marry Ron. "She continued writing on the board, not looking at us," was the way Margaret phrased it. They all shared her excitement and happiness, as well as her sorrow, at leaving this community where nothing but fond memories of Isobel, as an excellent teacher and sincere friend, remain. Leaving our annual school picnic, walking, amidst the laughter and good wishes of the people gathered there, Ron and Isobel struck out for Ron's car which was probably down the road beside a mud hole or stuck in one.

Ron and Isobel were married in the summer of 1934, and farmed in the Goodwin district where they raised their two children, Jerry and Sharon. But the call to return to her teaching career was hard to resist. In 1943-44 and 1944-45, Isobel answered that call at the Lindsay School. Again, she was always able to find time to help look after the neighbors' children, as well as managing a full-time teaching job and taking care of her own family. Many students can recall playing in her Rhythm Band where they played all kinds of funny things. When they participated in programs at the school or at the Bezanson Hall, Isobel always had them decked out in nice uniforms to suit the occasion. The students also remember the weekend camping at Sturgeon Lake, which was indeed quite an undertaking, but a great outing for the students, in those days. In 1944, the movie, Bambi, came to Grande Prairie. Isobel saw to it that all the Lindsay students saw the show, and also, enjoyed a treat at a local restaurant.

Isobel taught in the East Smoky School District at Mountain Springs, East Smoky, Moon's Mill, Edson Trail and Ravenna. She taught at Twilight but returned to East Smoky to accept positions at Ridgevalley and Valleyview. Branching further afield in 1959, Isobel accepted a teaching position at Golden Spike, a few miles out of Stony Plain. In 1960, she moved into Stony Plain, and, during the term, took two classes to view the Alberta Legislature in session. This was the first time a teacher had given students first-hand information about parliamentary procedure. Mr. Ira McLaughlin, M.L.A. had given his consent to such an undertaking.



Isobel's rhythm band. Lindsay school — 1942.

However, Isobel was not able to finish the term. Due to a heart condition, she passed away Feb. 2, 1960, at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Edmonton. Burial was in the Glen Leslie cemetery.

Isobel's kindness, devotion and initiative, in all her undertakings, will always be held in high esteem.

THE BILL MOODYS AT THE SMOKY RIVER — by son, Ron

My father, William James Moody, and mother, Harriet (Chedell) Moody, were born and raised at



Mr. and Mrs. Bill Moody — 1940's.

Southampton, England. They were married in 1898. Father was a qualified boiler engineer by trade. Many times he told me his reasons for leaving England was because of the 'class system' in England in those days. "This type of life was not for my four young sons," he said.

Father booked passage to Canada, on the Titanic. Due to the arrival of my uncle and aunt (Mr. and Mrs. Charles Havter), from Vegreville, Alberta, who had come to visit us, this passage was canceled. Later, father booked on the 'Prince Edward', so that both families could make the voyage together.

We landed in Canada in April of 1912, and lived in Vegreville until the spring of 1919. Father was employed at the Vegreville Power House. He had also acquired some cattle and a team of horses. While convalescing from a severe bout of the 1918 flu, father was advised, by his doctor, to get work out in the open air. Farming, which he had always had a yen to do, seemed to be the perfect answer. Next door neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Al Alderman, had already proved up their homestead in the Kleskun Hill district. In Vegreville, Al was a telegraph operator and station agent for the railway. In the early spring, he, too, became very ill with the flu and the doctor gave him the same advice as father was given. Mr. Alderman persuaded father to come to the Peace River country, which I am glad to say, was a move my dad and I never regretted.

Many people over the past years, wondered why father homesteaded this river valley and banks along the Smoky. On coming to Bezanson, father found most of the land was already taken by homesteaders and the Veterans of 1919. Al Aldermand and father launched a boat at Bezanson, came down river, crossed over to the east bank, where the Provincial Campsite is today, and looked the land over. They returned to the west bank that evening, and Dad, while checking over his charts, found the quarter that they were camping on, had not been filed on. "That's it! Let's get going, so we can get to Grande Prairie and file on it," said my father. Al used to kid Dad and relate, "I had a hell-of-a-time getting him to stay put 'til morning."

I think we lived in one of the most interesting places of the Peace River country, especially in the days of the Ferry. During those years, we knew everyone who lived from Valleyview to the Smoky. We met hundreds of interesting people from all over Canada and U.S.A., and had many exciting incidents, some good, some bad and many very funny happenings.

The story of how the ferry was joggled back and forth between the Goodwin crossing and the Bezanson Townsite, might be of interest to this area.

Mr. MacQuarrie, who I got to know very well, was Engineer in charge of Roads, Bridges and Ferries, in this area, in the early days. Prior to his work here, he was under Colonel Cornwall in charge of the surveying and building the Edson Trail from Athabaska to the Smoky. MacQuarrie told me that the crews just followed and widened the old original Indian trail in from Athabaska and at, what was later, called Goodwin crossing was where the Indians and early fur traders forded the Big Smoky. The first ferry was built



First boat to cross Smoky after the 1935 flood.



Crossing the Smoky River by ferry at Moody's Crossing.

in 1911, by the Goodwin Bros. with the help of the Manning Bros. and others.

When Mr. A. M. Bezanson was promoting his town, he built a tower and strung a cable across the river. Pat MacCann, who had a cattle ranch south of the Simonette river, was in charge of the moving of the Goodwin ferry, up river to the new Bezanson townsite. It was towed by a team of mules, aided by a gang of men.

In the fall of 1919, while we were still living in a tent on the Smoky's west bank, where the approach of the bridge now stands, the Dead Man (anchor post) snapped and allowed the cable to fall into the river. A crew was sent to retrieve it. The winter of 1921 or 1922, I'm not sure about the date, a bridge crew rebuilt the tower and installed a new cable.

Now this was when politics and intrigue took place. Mr. Rae, who was running against the Liberal candidate, promised the people of the north side of the district, that he would move the ferry back to its former site if they voted for him in the spring election. (This was told to me by the men involved; Pat MacCann, Jim Kimberly Sr. and Mr. MacQuarrie.) Mr. Kimberly was pilot at Bezanson Crossing and Pat MacCann was road foreman of a crew building roads east of the river.

The filching of the ferry had to be set up to look like an accident. Mr. Kimberly wanted no part of this plot. Now, Pat MacCann had found a better ranch and lease seven miles north of Goodwin, along the Smoky banks. This Irishman, who loved a practical joke, or a bit-o'-



Smoky River bridge opening — 1949.

fun at any time, had much to gain and he was all for moving the ferry. Pat and Jim changed jobs for that season.

Instead of the usual tower, the cable, at Bezanson, was fastened into the face of the cliff on the east river bank. As an extra precaution, Pat fastened a couple of extra sweeps to the ferry that spring, and made the row boat ready. He was eagerly awaiting the high water. One June morning, the stage was set. He chopped into the east side anchor, until he was sure any extra strain would snap it. Soon Tom Crowe, who loved to visit, came down to the Corssing to pick up his mail and groceries, and Pat delivered him to the Bezanson Townsite. Pat figured the time was ripe, so after Tom drove his team upon the ferry, Pat distracted his passenger by talking a mile a minute while he let the ferry drift out without any slope. The current caught it broadside and the cable gave way. The ferry drifted to the end of the cable, then swung back to the the west bank. Pat helped the excited man to get his team and outfit back to the Bezanson Town, where he spent the night with friends.

The wiley Irishman had recruited a good number of homesteaders to be on call for his big surprise, without really letting them know what was about to take place. In a short time, the ferry was escorted down river and by five o'clock that afternoon, she rested back on the cable at the Goodwin Crossing.

When Tom found the ferry at the old original crossing he realized that the whole affair had been a hoax and he sure tore a strip off that Irish ferry pilot!

Pat finished out the summer, and the following spring, Mr. Kimberly took over and was operator until the fall of 1929, when he became ill. My dad became operator from 1930 into the 1940's. Father's health began to fail, so brother Reg, with the help from time to time, of Fred Sedore, and Slim Calberry, ran it until in 1949, and with the festivities of the bridge opening, he made the last trip that afternoon. Another chapter of our early pioneer days had closed.

LESTER JOHN NELLIS (NICKNAMED MOOSE)

Moose was born, at Cumberland, Wisconsin, on January 13, 1886, of Dutch and French parents. His mother, Amelia, was Dutch; and father, Barney, was French. His mothers' family immigrated from Holland, and she was born in New York State. When she was three years old, her family moved to Ashland, Minnesota. Her mother ran a boarding house and her father was a plasterer. They moved to Duluth, Minnesota, and both parents died there, father in 1913 and mother in 1925.

When Moose was about six years old and lived in Duluth, the street cars were pulled by horses and mules. Then they decided to put in electricity, so installed electric street cars. There was a big celebration to show how they worked — no passengers. A group were standing near a Chinamans' shop watching, and the street car went whizzing by. The Chinaman looked with surprise and then said "No pully, no pushy, but goes like helly." The cost of a ride was five cents.

Moose played football in Minnesota and right to this day, (1976), he really enjoys watching football on T.V.

Moose, and brother Gene, worked in sawmills. There were seven sawmills in Duluth. They made laths for so much a thousand (contract work). They put fifty laths to a bunch and twenty bunches to make a thousand. One of the mills was at Rainy Lake, seven miles east of Ft. Francis, Ontario. Stella Robideau's brothers worked for Moose. During their second year working together, the mill burned down. Moose then went to work in International Falls, Minnesota. Here he met his future wife, Stella Robideau. Here Moose learned to type and do shorthand.

Stella and Moose were married August 10, 1911. They had four children there, and three more after coming to Bezanson, in the Peace River Country. The children were, Myrtle, born in 1911; Orville, born in 1912; Ted, born in 1914; and Lloyd, born in 1915; Bill, born in 1918; Harry, born in 1920; and Mayme, born in 1923.

In April of 1916, Moose and his brother-in-law, Irving Robideau, came to Grande Prairie. It took them from Monday morning until Friday evening to come, by train, from Edmonton to Grande Prairie. Here Moose filed on the N.W. 12-72-3 W6th, and Irving on the N.E. 12-72-3 W6th. Also, Irving filed, by proxy, for his father, Peter, and brothers, Ernie, Roy and Ed. Moose stayed until fall and painted for a living. He painted the Union Bank, where the Royal Bank now stands, in Grande Prairie. He went back that winter and, in the spring of 1917, he brought his wife and four children back, where they started homesteading. Stella's parents and brothers and sisters came too. They arrived April 3rd.

Myrtle was deaf, so they sent her to Winnipeg, Manitoba, to a school for the deaf for six or seven years.

Moose farmed until 1926, and then moved to Grande Prairie until 1932. He did painting there for a living. The older boys lived on the farm in the summer and did some farming.

While the flu was on, in 1918, Moose, Lee Strong and Ole (Sparkplug) Nelson didn't get it, so they helped to look after the sick. The immigration hall was turned into a hospital.

While they were living in Grande Prairie, Moose painted quite a number of buildings. Some were; an eight room school (Montrose), Lindsay school, Doctor O'Briens' house, also Cecil Bells', Flemings', and George and Frank Crummys' houses. Then during the second World War, he painted the barracks that were in Grande Prairie.

Moose loved sports, so he played baseball in Grande Prairie in 1920 and 1921 or maybe longer. He couldn't really remember. A couple of the boys he played with were, Frank Turner and a Johnson lad. When his boys got big enough to play, Moose never missed a game. At times he coached and at others, umpired. When he got too old for that, he was a spectator, and a rousing one at that!

Now, in 1976, his family are all married and have children and some have grandchildren.

Myrtle married Bill Schamehorn and lives at Notikewin, (northern Alberta).

Orville married Irene Bulford, and for a time lived in Grande Prairie, Dawson Creek, B.C. and now, they are running a store at Wembley, Alberta.

Ted married a girl from Debolt, Alberta, Opal Boe. They live in Grande Prairie. Ted is a carpenter.

Lloyd married Lorna LaValley, and have lived in a number of places; for quite some time on a farm in Bezanson, Grande Prairie, Ft. McMurray (boom oil town), and now in Clairmont, Alberta. Lloyd is also a carpenter.

Bill married a nurse from Beaverlodge, Betty Morrison. They live on a farm at Glen Leslie. Bill is a carpenter and farmer.

Harry married an English girl, Grace Taylor, when he was overseas during the second world war. They farmed until a few years ago; now Harry works for the County of Grande Prairie, in the work shop. They are living in Grande Prairie. They still own their farm, however.

Mayme, their youngest girl, married an American airforce lad, Herb Branch, and went to live in Louisianna, U.S.A. Every two years, or oftener, she comes home to help celebrate her parents anniversary, and visits with them for two weeks.

Moose and Stella celebrated their sixtieth anniversary, in 1971, with all their family home and ever so many friends. Now they have passed their sixty-fifth and are still going strong, living in their own home, on their farm! Every weekend they have lots of company from children and families, to close friends, and Stella always has pies, cakes and lots of other food cooked to feed them. Moose had his ninety-first birthday in January and Stella was eighty-five on January twenty-eighth.

LLOYD AND LORNA (LaVALLEY) NELLIS

I was born in 1921 on the LaValley homestead on a beautiful June morning, ushered into the world by Dr. Labaddi and Aunt Lucy Rooney. The bill was $10.00.

I started school in 1928 with teacher, Murry Skinner; but the teacher I have never forgotten was Mary Clifford. Besides teaching a school packed full of kids, she helped the people of the community put on plays and dances to get money for school yard equipment. Then she started a girl's club to get a piano for the school. We had beautiful Christmas concerts in the winter, and hikes and picnics in the summer.

In 1940, the people of Bezanson and Lindsay decided to build a curling rink. Mr. Chas. Moon loaned his mill, cook house and bunk houses to the young people and every man from 16 to 25 who could spare 1 to 14 days went to the bush to cut, haul and saw the logs. Those who couldn't go, sent groceries and baking. It took two weeks. Allie LaValley, Evelen Ford and June Ferris went to serve meals the first week. Myrtle Ford, Grace Hackwell and myself went the second week. The boys hauled the lumber up to Bezanson in the spring but the war broke out before the rink was built, so the lumber was sold and later the fund went into the new Bezanson Hall.

Lloyd and I were married in 1942 and moved onto the Louie Calliou ½ section on which was a two story log house, log barns and a huge garden. With the cows, pigs and chickens we got for wedding presents, we were all set to go farming.

We spent the first four years farming in the summer and working in the lumber mills in the winter. When Sally was born, I stayed home and did chores when Lloyd was away doing carpenter work in the winter.

Our four children are: Roger now married to Donna Murphy of Halifax. They have one child Tara Lee and live in Sherwood Park, Edmonton.

Marie married Ed LaCroix and have four children; Valerie, Cheryle, Wendy, and Roland and live in Edson, Alta.

Lois married Norman Charney and have three children; Douglas, Darrin and Leah. They live in Crooked Creek.

Sally married Stanley Sedore. They have two children; James and Lisa. They live in Grande Prairie.

ORVAL AND IRENE (BULFORD) NELLIS AND FAMILY

On July 15, 1940, Irene became the bride of Orval Nellis, in a ceremony officiated by Rev. Thorpe, at the Nellis family home in Bezanson. They were attended by Mayme Nellis and Roger LaValley. Their first homes were in the Bezanson area, where a son, Wayne, was born, on December 24, 1941.

Orval joined the Air Force in May, 1943, as an engine mechanic, and Irene and Wayne moved to Hamilton, Ontario, where Shirley was born on December 17, 1943. Within a year, Irene moved back to the Bezanson area, with her two children, until Orval was discharged on April 7, 1945. Orval then took a welding course, in 1946, and worked at this trade until 1974.

Wayne attended his first school at Charlie Moon's Mill. His first teacher was Mrs. Fred Moon. Stanley was born on February 16, 1948. His first home was at the mill. The family moved to Grande Prairie in the spring of 1948, where Orval started working at Steele Industries Ltd., and in October, 1949, they became the proud owners of their first home. Irene and Orval added three more sons to their family; Donald on October 13, 1949, Philip on February 29, 1952, and Gordon on December 5, 1956. All six children took their basic schooling in Grande Prairie. Irene started to work at Woolworth's in 1960, and, when the family moved to Dawson Creek, in August, 1966, she transferred to Woolworth's there. She worked there until 1968, when she went to work at Kresge's, until 1974.

Wayne, followed in Dad's footsteps, and joined the Air Force in March, 1963, where he trained in Radar



Mr. and Mrs. Orval Nellis and family — Don, Stan, Wayne, Gordon, Philip, Irene, Shirley and Orval.

Air Communications and Electronics. He married Doreen Skelly, from New Market, Ontario, on February 22, 1964. They have two sons; Robert, who is 12 years old and Michael, who is 10. They are presently living at the C.F. Base, at Namao.

Shirley, took a Business Course at St. Joseph's College, in Grande Prairie, and is presently living in Dawson Creek. She is a legal secretary in the law firm of Clancy, Pryke and Associates.

Stanley, took all his schooling in Grande Prairie, and was employed by Imperial Lumber until his death on July 18, 1972.

Donald apprenticed as a baker and now owns and operates the Fairview Bakery. He married Ellen Haugseth, on September 11, 1971. They have one daughter, Deanna, now three years of age.

Philip, finished high school in Dawson Creek, then went to the University at Vancouver, where he studied Education. He married Christine Gronlund, on July 5, 1975. They are living in Prince George, where they both teach school.

Gordon finished Grade 12, in Dawson Creek, and is now working, as partsman, at Trumpeter Pontiac, in Grande Prairie. He is living at home.

In 1974, Irene and Orval changed their lifestyle, and bought the Wembley General Store, which they jointly own and operate, to this writing.

GILBERT AND CENA NELSON

Gilbert and Cena Nelson, with 18 month old daughter, Minnie, left Norway in 1908 and emigrated to International Falls, Minnesota. Gilbert, a blacksmith by trade, soon found work in the Falls. The second daughter, Annie, was born in 1909. The family lived here for the next seven years.

Homesteading in the Peace River Country, was making big headlines in Northern Minnesota at this time, so Mr. and Mrs. Nelson and girls came to Alberta. In Edmonton, they worked for a year before leaving for Grande Prairie on one of the first trains into this region. Gilbert filed on the S.W. 13-72-3 W6th in 1916; built a small cabin, then returned to Grande Prairie to work. Sometime later, he moved his family out to the homestead at Bezanson.

While Mr. Nelson was employed away from home, Cena and the two young daughters worked hard to keep the farm going for the next six years. Mr. Nelson was killed in a mine accident.



Mrs. Cena Nelson.

Mrs. Cena Nelson lived most of her life in the Bezanson District and spent years performing housekeeping duties as a means of self-support. She retired on a small acreage, on the Henry Tripp farmstead, where she raised chickens and grew vegetables and beautiful flowers. Mrs. Nelson is fondly remembered as a kindly person, who was always ready to lend a hand to friends in need of help. She always had treats and homebaked cookies for her young friends in the community.

In her later years, she went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Reaume. These folks took her to Penticton when they retired from the farm. Some years later, she entered Oak Lodge, where she remained until she passed away at the age of ninety-three. She was buried in the Kelowna cemetery.

(NELSON) MINNIE HOGELUND

In 1908, as a baby, I came to North America with my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Nelson. We lived in the Falls; left Minnesota and came to Grande Prairie in 1916. We lived in town, while father worked on the homestead, clearing land and building a log cabin. He would return to do blacksmith work in Grande Prairie for extra capital.



Minnie (Nelson) Hogelund.

I recall, in the spring of 1918, we headed out to our new home, over muddy trails, with a team and wagon. All our worldly goods were piled in the wagon box, our cow and pony were tied on behind. The journey took hours, but to an eleven year old girl, it was a big adventure.

Like most pioneer children of this area, I did my share of hard work, root picking, gardening, tending livestock, etc. The Bezanson townsite was 8 miles from home. This meant a long ride to obtain our mail and groceries each week. I recall one trip in 25 degrees below zero weather. Returning home with a 50 lb. sack of flour across the horse, slowed my progress and I froze both feet. For months I was unable to wear shoes, and my left foot still bears the scars of that episode.

The Lindsay School wasn't built till four years later. Father worked away from home most of the time, so my responsibilities on the farm ended my chance of further education. I do recall taking sister Annie and the Nellis children to school during the winter months of the early 20's, but chores prevented me from attending these classes.

One Grande Prairie sports, while still in my teens, I rode Frank Donald's favorite race horse and won the second prize of $25 for the race. Mr. Donald gave me half of the prize money. It was the first money I had ever earned, so I felt as rich as a king that day.

In the early 20's, I worked for Bill and Vera Ford for two years, then moved to Grande Prairie to work, for Mr. and Mrs. Frank Donald, for a number of years. Later I married and raised a son, Henry Hogelund.

Henry is married; lives in Toronto, tunes pianos, sings and plays in his own orchestra. He and Irene have four lovely children, whom I enjoy visiting on my rare vacations to Ontario.

MR. AND MRS. ED. S. NICHOL

I, George Cave, was taken by my Aunt and Uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Nichol, to raise, as my mother and father died when I was quite young. Mrs. Nichol was my mother's sister, and I always called them Auntie and Uncle.

We arrived in Grande Prairie the first part of January, 1918, by train, and stayed at the Empire Hotel for a couple of weeks. Uncle Ed had been up in May, 1917, and had filed on the S.W. 22-72-3 W6th.

We went out to Bill Holosky's place and took care of his place while he was away for a couple of months. When Bill came back, he and Uncle Ed, built a cabin 14' x 18', on skids. Before breakup, they loaded it on two hind bobs of sleighs, at the back, and one front bob in front, and with four horses, and hauled it out to the homestead.

One thing I remember well was when Bill and Ed went to town to get our supplies, before moving out to stay, and they got a case of eggs. For some unknown



Mr. and Mrs. Ed Nichol — 1958.

reason, the team ran away and upset the sleigh. What a mess! Broken eggs were all over everything.

We left early one morning, by wagon, for town. We were all day going out. Bare ground most of the way, except where there had been big snow drifts, which the team of horses had a hard time getting the wagon through, and across the red willow slough, where the water was up to their bellies. We arrived before dark, and got unloaded. Bill went over to Malloys for the night, as he had a stable. There we were with no means of transportation except walking.

Mr. Malloy came over a few days later and tried to plow a fire guard around our place. Where the snow



Charlie Ames and Ern Ford's threshing outfit on the Nichol homestead.

had drifted over the hill, there was still snow and the ground was frozen, so he didn't do too good a job.

About two or three weeks later, we had our first experience of a prairie fire. When it was about half a mile away, Uncle Ed started a back fire, where it had not been plowed, and managed to get a strip burned, only just in time, before the main fire reached us.

Uncle Ed worked for different people around. Mostly for Harry Card in exchange for the use of horses to break up about ten acres the first year. That is the way it went for the next two or three years.

Tom Telfer took Uncle Ed out to Calgary and bought two car loads of horses, which they shipped back to Clairmont and sold. We got four work horses and a saddle horse out of the deal and also got a good wagon, box and harness.

Ed helped other homesteaders out with the horses for the use of machinery, which left us until the last to get our crop in and harvested.

One fall, we were cutting our crop of oats, a beautiful crop, and had about two hours left to finish cutting. It snowed that night and took us about a week to cut, cutting one way. After that, they got machinery of their own, and with the usual ups and downs of farming, they stayed on the homestead until they retired to Grande Prairie, in 1945, where they lived until 1959.

When we moved to Victoria, we took them along with us. They had their own home, four houses up the street from us, where they lived until Auntie died in 1963. Uncle Ed then went back to Ontario to live with our daughter, Georgina, as he wanted to go back where they had been born, Ed in 1873 and Auntie in 1876.

Uncle Ed died in 1966. They are both buried in the Royal Oak cemetery in Victoria, B.C.

THE JEROME NORTON FAMILY

Jerome Norton was born in Brussels, Belgium, on January 10, 1890. He went to the U.S.A. with his parents, at the age of five. He worked in sawmills, as a sawyer, most of his life.

He married Lillie Olive Robideau, on February 3, 1913, in Bemidji, Minnesota. It was so cold, Lillies' flowers froze in the church. Harriet Robideau, sister of the bride and now Mrs. Harriet McFadzen of Bezanson, was bridesmaid. Henry Norton, brother of the groom, was best man.

Lillie and Jerome arrived in Grande Prairie on March 18, 1918, from Bemidji, Minnesota. They had three children at that time. It took them seven hours to



Front row, left to right: Laura, Mr. and Mrs. Jerome, and Ruby Norton. Back row: Fred, Earl, Shirley, Stella, Ed, Grace, Olive, Clyde and Ralph Norton.

go from Clairmont to Grande Prairie by train, as the snow was so deep. They then went, by sleigh and team, to Lillies' parents, Mr. and Mrs. Peter S. Robideau, of Bezanson, about twenty-two miles east of Grande Prairie.

They stayed there all summer until their log house was built that fall. It was a mile away and had a sod roof. We burned wood for heat and used coaloil lamps for light.

The farming was all done by horses. Some years the crops were good, but, some years they froze early.

The family moved into a new two story house in 1927. They had seven children, who attended Lindsay school. They walked two miles to school in summer and went the distance by team and sleigh in winter.

The children have always lived around the Bezanson and Grande Prairie areas.

Earl married Mary Smashnuk in 1942. They had one child, Marilyn, now Mrs. Brian McDonald, of Grande Prairie.

Olive married Morris Stewart in 1938. They had two children, Phyllis, now Mrs. Donald Partlow, and Harvey, married to Valerie Tysowski, who live in Grande Prairie and area.

Clyde married Betty Coney in 1936. They had three children. Donald, of Clairmont, married Joan Crerar. Ellen married Doug Lewis and Maryanne, now Mrs. Ken Bruno lives in Grande Prairie.

Ralph married Edna Boe in 1941. They had four children. Ken, who married Sharon Stokke, of Wembley; Carol, now Mrs. Barry Edgar, and Beverly, Mrs. Ross Gordon, both of Grande Prairie, and Lillian, now Mrs. Dennis Ray of Beaverlodge.

Grace married Wilfred Menard in 1946. They live in Bezanson.

Ruby married Clarence Boyer in 1948. They had four children: Brian married Jackie Jarrett, now of Sexsmith; Sharon, now Mrs. Dale Sheridan of Grande Prairie; and Wayne and Verna living at home in Grande Prairie.

Fred, who married Barbara Starkey in 1951, passed away in 1954. They had two children, Geraldine, married to Stanley Jackson, living in Edmonton, and Freda, now Mrs. Roger Boisvert of Grande Prairie.

Stella, Mrs. Bob Kimble, of Crystal Creek area, had four children: Gerald, married to Mae Turner, lives in Grande Prairie; Ronald, married to Cheryl Alstad, lives in the Crystal Creek area; Joyce, Mrs. Bill McLandress, of Grande Prairie; Eugene, married to Dianne Pfau, also of Grande Prairie.

Laura, married Ken Patterson in 1946, now lives in Grande Cache. They had three children: Barbara, Mrs. Rod Fredrickson of Kelowna; Ernie, married Caryn Moore, now of Edmonton; and Donna, now Mrs. Robert Sexton, of Calgary.

Edwin married Elsie Holman in 1954. They had four children: Murray, married to Marilyn Gustofson, lives in the Wembley area; and Dale, Dianne and Barry, all of Grande Prairie.

Shirley married Robert Boyd in 1952. They had six children: Gary, married Nora Fredborg; and Frank, Sandra, Darrel, Roger and Kathy all live at home in Grande Prairie.

Lillie Norton passed away on September 21, 1962, and Jerome on December 24, 1976.

THE ORR FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. Orr and their family; Clarence, Monty, Theo, their daughter, and Fred, the youngest child, arrived in the Peace River country, in about 1919. Mr. Orr took up the N½ 1-73-3 W6th; a homestead and a soldier's grant. They started farming under the Soldiers Settlement Board scheme, as he was a war veteran. He evidently hadn't had too much farming experience before coming to this country to homestead.

Clarence, the older son, stayed only a short while before returning to Vancouver.

Tragedy seemed to stalk this fine family. Mrs. Orr died, of cancer, in 1923. About a year later, Monty and Freddie, the two younger sons, were returning from a trapping expedition up along the Smoky river. The raft they were riding on, was upset by an overhanging tree. Monty, the older boy, was swept into the river and drowned. Freddie managed to grasp the branches and scramble to safety. Although dragging operations were carried on for several days by the police, the body was never recovered.

Discouraged, Mr. Orr, and his two remaining children, returned to B.C.

In 1928, Jim Coney and his family moved to Bezanson, from Scotland. They bought the Orr place, from the Soldier's Settlement Board, and made it their home.

THE POIRIER STORY — by Martha (Poirier) Skinner

"We went to start a French-Canadian Co-operative homesteading colony, in the Peace River country of Alberta," the missionary priest was pointing out to his audience in the church in Fort William, Ontario. The year was fall, of 1916, and Canada was in the middle of World War I, and wheat prices were high.

"There are forty French-Canadian families in Winnipeg, who are ready to join our movement. They, together with you who decide to go from here, will send your furniture, leasing whole freight cars, and traveling by train, next spring to Edmonton. From there you will go up north, to Grande Prairie, on the E.D. and B.C. railway; then East, by wagon, 30 miles to the Smoky River, where we will begin our settlement. The government will give each man 160 acres for only ten dollars, and we will all share the farm implements that we buy. We will help one another by sharing labour, in putting up cosy log houses to live in, and breaking land for gardens and crops."

"Huge potatoes, and other vegetables, grow quickly in the warm sunny climate, where the earth is black and rich; wine will flow like water from the grapes grown and, although it is quite far north, warm Chinook winds melt the snow in the winter."

This sounded almost like Heaven to the Poiriers. They had prospered in Fort William; John working in the grain elevators, and later owning a livery stable, but cars were replacing horses and he was unable to work anymore in the elevator. So that, by 1916, he found it hard to feed and clothe the three children, who were left at home; the four others had grown up.



Front row, left to right: John, Mrs. John and Wilfred Poirier. Back row: Martha, Ernie and Leah Poirier.

To Hermanie Rochon and family, who were struggling along on a poor rocky farm near Fort William, the words of the missionary sounded very promising, and Stanley Pronovost and family, also farming, weren't long in deciding to join the venture.

By the fall of 1916, the three families, Poiriers, Rochons and Pronovosts, had decided to sell their holdings in Fort William and join the forty families from Winnipeg, in the move to the Peace River country of Alberta.

As the winter of 1916 slowly passed, I, Martha Poirier, could not make up my mind whether to be glad or sorry. It was my last year in elementary school, and I realized that I would be leaving all my friends behind, but after our two houses were sold sometime in the winter, we all realized we were taking a big step in our lives.

Many visits were made back and forth between our good friends, Rochons and Pronovosts, and by spring, they had disposed of their farms and plans were completed as to the amount of furniture that would be taken, and the date of May 1st was settled upon as the date of departure.

A box car was spotted on the siding, and beds, tables, chairs, stoves and dishes were all stowed carefully away; tearful goodbyes said to friends and members of the family who would go later, and the three-family expedition set out on the C.P.R. passenger train, about a week later than the freight car. I stayed behind to finish my school year; staying with my sister, Ida.

The first premonition of bad luck, that was to dog them, came when they reached Winnipeg. Not a single family of the promised forty, joined them! Added to this, the three Fort William families had to pay the entire cost of the freight car, and this, added to the expense of the tickets made a large dent in their supply of money. The three families, from Fort William, continued on, even though it meant the end of the dream of a French-Canadian Colony.

Towards the middle of May, they arrived in Grande Prairie. They were very happy to get off the train. The first thing they had to do was to buy horses and a wagon for each family. This was done, and after purchasing a supply of groceries, the three families set out for Bezanson. They were directed by the missionary, who tried to keep their spirits up. By this time, it seemed a very long way from Fort William and all their friends.

All went well until the Red Willow Slough was reached. It had not dried very well and there were pools of water everywhere. We noticed the horses straining more and more, with the wagon wheels sinking deeper and deeper in the black gooey mud. It wasn't long before the horses could go no further.

Nearly everybody jumped out to push and, sure enough, with the extra help the horses started up with a jerk. Young Philip Rochon, who was still in the wagon, was thrown into the water and could have drowned in the excitement. He was rescued by the missionary, who was wallowing around in his long robes in the mud, and I'm sure the priest heard some very strange and fervent prayers, uttered by the men of the expedition, before the faithful horses got them moving again.

The next day, after spending the night with some kind people, they arrived at the Bezanson Townsite.

In 1917, when my family arrived, there were several families there: Pat, Daisy and Rudolph Croken, who were keeping store, and Bryentons, who ran a store and Post office.

The three families had mixed feelings about this area. The Rochon's homesteaded near the Bezanson school. Later they and the Pronovosts found homesteads east of the Sexsmith area.

Meanwhile I had received many cheerful letters from my folks. When the school term ended, my father arranged for me to come west. My brother Wilfred, aged 23 and single, worked as a telegraph operator for the C.N.R. He had a free pass for himself and family. Wilfred claimed me as his 13 year old daughter and the kindly conductors just let it pass.

The family had to find a place to live. They heard of an empty house, Allan's, at the top of the hill, that could be rented, together with the land; some 20 acres being cultivated.

Our furniture had arrived previously, so we were glad to move into our own place. Now, we had a home, and we had a field where we could grow some valuable wheat, and it was early enough in the season to get the crop in.

My! How they worked to get that crop in, and then more heartaches! A late June frost threatened one night, so Leah and I built smoke smudges to keep the frost from damaging the beautiful crop of wheat. We ran all around the field, working hard, to build the smudges but to no avail! The next day the crop was ruined and, by this time, the money was all gone; but we did manage to salvage enough wheat to make poor grade flour, and with this, somehow, Mother managed to make pretty good bread.

Dad went out to work, and the days got colder and colder. The house was rickety and drafty, but Mother showed us how to stuff the cracks with pieces of cloth to keep out the cold, and we managed to keep from getting pneumonia.

As Christmas drew nearer, our new life did not

seem so attractive, but fortunately for us, we had become acquainted with Oliver Menard; a very fine man. He insisted on us moving into his house for the winter. He had a palace compared to the one we were trying to live in, and we were very happy to accept his invitation. Our first Christmas in the Peace River Country, turned out to be a happy one. Leah and I had fun decorating the room and tree with strings of popcorn, colored paper rings, spruce boughs and bits of gay ribbon.

Christmas morning the gifts were given with great love; new hair ribbons for Leah and me, a pair of suspenders for Ernie, Mother received a new pair of warm mitts, while Dad got a plug of pipe tobacco. Our host, Oliver, was given a couple of cans of snuff.

Several of Oliver's chickens were prepared, together with ample servings of potatoes, turnips, and carrots from the garden; and fine carrot pudding topped off the repast. Gallons of tea washed it down. Toasts, of good Saskatoon wine, were drunk; after which games were played in which everyone joined. Later, when we tired of this, we started singing songs.

Ernie, who was quite proficient on the harmonica and could play the fiddle, so was able to accompany all the singers. Leah was learning to play and had a fine ear for music. She could certainly harmonize with me in the war songs; "Tipperary", "Pack up Your Troubles" and "Alouette", which made the rafters ring.

After Christmas, Ernie spent the rest of the winter with the Crokens, who lived nearer to school. City-bred Ernie, found the eight grades in one room, very confusing. It wasn't long before he and his best friend, Philip Rochon, were enjoying themselves.

Miss Ida Colby was the teacher. Besides Ernie and Philip, there were six or so Lanctot children, three Colbys; Ivan, George and Imogene, two Stewarts; Florence and Roy, four Allens; Cecil, Grace, Mildred and Gladys Bryenton.

One morning in late May, Ernie arrived at school with a surprise for the children; he hung his cap in the cloak room and took his seat. A great howl of laughter arose from the children. The Crokens, great practical jokers, had given Ernie his summer hair cut with clippers, shaving it all off except for a long tuft, the size of a fifty cent piece on the crown of his head. Ernie had not realized that they had left this, but Philip remedied the situation at recess when he took his jack knife and hacked it off, a few hairs at a time. Those were great days for Ernie; probably some of the best of his life.

In late May, the terrible Spanish Flu struck, and our little community, so remote from so-called civilization, was not spared. Practically everybody came down with it, and our household was no exception. We were all in bed at the same time with chills, high fever and weakness. The only one who did not get it was Dad. He nursed us all, and did everything for us. When the fever was high, he would put cold cloths on our foreheads. He made soup for us and attended to all our wants. I remember, he tried to give us sauerkraut to eat. He said it was good for us, as he had eaten a lot and he never got the Flu.

No-one died in our family. Perhaps it was the good nurse, or maybe it was the sauerkraut. Who knows? And perhaps it was the prayers of my devout Mother, who was never too sick to pray.

I well remember the terrible nose bleeds I suffered. They may have caused the deafness, which soon appeared and which lasted many years, to be followed by hearing aids and finally an operation, which enabled me to have almost normal hearing again.

After a couple of terrible weeks, we began to improve and then the magic of spring took over.

That year, we spent at Olivers, and he and my Dad went in partnership on the crop. After a fine start, when prospects looked good, a bad frost came and ruined most of the wheat and again money was scarce.

That winter, of 1918-19, was bitterly cold. I recall my Dad and Oliver starting out one day for Grande Prairie, in 60 degrees below Fahrenheit weather, with a load of wheat. It was sort of hazy and the sleigh runners made a scratching sound, like sand, on the frozen snow. They hadn't gone very far, when they had to turn back. The horses' noses were bleeding. That load, of poor grade wheat, didn't get sold for a few days, until the weather moderated.

Somehow, we got through the winter; a little money going a long way. Mother was a wonderful manager and if she ever got discouraged, she never showed it.

Spring, of 1919, finally came, and as Oliver was getting married, we moved to John Ordoway's homestead, on the banks of the Wapiti river.

Mr. Ordoway, who was quite elderly, was a very kind man and he lived alone. He seemed glad to have our company. He had a good crop of large trees on his place, so Dad, Wilfred and Mr. Ordoway started to harvest them. The trees would be used to build our log house for the homestead, N.W. 19-72-2 W6, that we filed on, on the banks of the Smoky; a distance of seven miles north of the Bezanson townsite. One load a day was all we could manage, but at the end of a couple of weeks, the pile was growing.

A grand surprise happened in the late spring. Our older brother, George, received his discharge from the army and he came to visit us. I remember it all so clearly. It was a fine day in June when Leah looked out and said that there was a soldier coming down the road. Mother looked and, although he was some distance away, she exclaimed, "I know it's George". What an evening that was! 'The fatted calf', in the form of a few chickens, was sacrificed, and a real feast was held. George had many tales for us, but not as gory as we younger ones would have liked.

After a short visit, George returned to Saskatoon where he had a good job, and the rest of the men resumed the task of building the log house. This took up the whole year, and we were not able to move until the spring of 1920. But before we were ready to move, an incident took place that was highly amusing.

Mr. Ordoway had a good sized log house, a rough log barn for his mules and cows, and, a little distance along a good path, was the usual little house with the half-moon in the door and an Eaton's catalogue on the wall of the two-holer.

One warm Sunday afternoon, we saw two riders approaching on their horses. It turned out to be Warren Beatty and Albert Payne, two young men who had

ranches across the river. One was carrying a heavy hunting rifle. We visited for a while; exchanging all the local gossip and news, and the conversation got around to shooting and good shots. They asked Leah and me if we could shoot, but neither of us had ever fired a gun, so immediately they volunteered to teach us. A tin can was placed on a post about 50 yards away and fairly near the toilet. Warren fired, hitting the can. So he reloaded and handed the gun to me. He instructed me how to go about it and warned me about holding the butt hard against my shoulder. I held it carefully, sighted along the barrel and pulled the trigger. The recoil nearly knocked me off my feet and this concluded my lesson, as I missed the can and my shoulder was sore. Now it was Leah's turn. She held the gun exactly as they showed her, squinted down the barrel at the target; but then, before she pulled the trigger, expecting the kick from the rifle, she involuntarily turned her head sideways, and closed her eyes, and as she did that, she also turned the rifle. Bang! Leah was nearly knocked over, and the dust flew from a board in the toilet. If anyone had been seated there, they'd have gotten a bullet squarely between the eyes.

So much had to be done all at the same time; move our furniture, cultivate a little patch of land and get a garden started, cultivate a few acres for a crop of wheat, odds and ends around the house, besides getting started on a barn for a shelter for the two horses, the cow, and the pig, Nancy, that was very tame and that came when we called her.

When the time came, in the fall, to butcher Nancy, there was nearly a revolt in the Poirier household, and we children had to be pretty hungry before we could bear to eat the pork.

The year, 1920-21, proved to be a long, hard winter for us. Ernie had to quit school, as it was too far to ride horseback; nine miles and on different occasions he froze parts of his body. Dad was away working in Grande Prairie and Mother had the responsibility of being in charge of the household.

She was very resourceful. She used to take wood ashes from the stove, mix it with water to form lye and use it to scrub the floor. It was hard on the hands, wringing out the mop and using a scrub brush. It took lots of elbow grease and made our hands red and sore, but did it ever make the wide soft wood floor boards nice and white!

Did anyone ever eat rosehip catsup? There was never money for such luxuries as real catsup, so Mother made some. She gathered gallons of rosehips, boiled them and strained out the seeds, added vinegar and whatever spices were in the cupboard; and do you know, it was quite appetizing on meat. She also discovered that boiled carrots or turnips made a good substitute for pumpkin in our favorite pie.

Father took our wheat to Sexsmith to be milled and Mother made wonderful home-made bread from this flour. This annual trip was a fine excuse for Mother and Dad to visit the Rochons and Pronovosts. Both families were prospering near Sexsmith, and Mr. Pronovost had acquired a sawmill and was into the lumber business. These three families exchanged visits often and they remained friends throughout the years.

By means of hard work, Dad and Ernie had managed to break fifty acres and this gave us good crops to sell. Wilfred had returned to his job as railway telegraph operator.

The social life of the community consisted of the odd dance in Lindsay school, as well as dances held nearly every week at the Community Hall.

We went to nearly every dance, but one in particular, I remember. As we were putting on our best clothes, I discovered that the sole of my shoe was coming loose. I began to cry with disappointment. It was the only pair that I owned. Mother came to the rescue. Taking the shoe, she put it on the shoemaker's last, one of which was in each pioneer home, but she could only find four shoe tacks. So, she put one tack in each corner of the sole and finished fastening it with thumb tacks. Later, at the dance, as I was being swung wildly in a square dance, my shoe forgotten, Mother leaned over to Dad and said in French, "Martha's shoe is flashing like that of a little horse." The light from the gas lamp was being reflected by all the thumb tacks, but I had a wonderful time and danced every dance.

I must tell you about another dance that did not have such a happy ending. We were all going to a dance down at the Townsite, so we piled into the democrat and away we went. There was Wilfred, Mother, Leah and I. Dad did not go, being too tired. We were all in fine spirits and I had my violin. All went well until we were part way down the hill. Something must have scared the horses because they started to run. We were gaining speed by the minute and we girls were terrified. Suddenly, there was a crack and the neck yoke came free of the pole. The pole dropped to the ground and this catapulted the democrat into the air, and all of us onto the ground. Away went the horses towards the Townsite.

Leah and I were not hurt badly, having only scratches on our hands and legs, but we could hear someone moaning. It was Mother. There she was, staggering around in a daze, blood streaming down her face from a forehead laceration and hardly realizing what had happened. We bandaged her head with a towel, and by this time, we saw Wilfred sitting in the middle of the road holding the neck of the violin. It was all that was left of it. Wilfred complained of a pain in his side and thought he had a cracked rib.

In the meantime, some of the men at the dance, came to investigate. They took Mother to Doc. Labbadie, who gave her a few stitches, then drove her home to Dad, while Leah and I went on to the dance and had a great time.

Those dances were really great. At intermission Dad and Mother were often invited to get up and step dance. Dad was usually ready, but Mother had to be coaxed a little. They had a pretty good variety of steps and there will be a few who will remember seeing them perform.

In 1923, I decided that I was not needed on the farm, and went to Grande Prairie and got a job. I worked in a restaurant for a short time. Then I joined forces with my uncle, Toots Mireault, and his wife who had started an ice-cream parlour, and helped them. Soon they decided to go to Minneapolis. I went along too, and

landed back in Fort William where my sister, Ida, was married. I got a good job there.

Back on the homestead, they were struggling along. Dad had never done any farming, so he had to learn the hard way. They were never able to buy the equipment needed for a really successful venture, but they were able to make a living. By this time, Ernie was taking charge and he worked very hard at it. He also worked at Rooney's to help pay for the groceries.

Leah had always wanted to be a nurse so, in 1924, she made all her plans to go to Saskatoon, Sask. and train. For some reason, she wanted to go to Grande Prairie and buy her ticket a week ahead of time. She jumped on Teddy and rode 28 miles to town; got her ticket and stayed with some friends overnight, then started home the next day.

At that time, one had to leave the road past Robideaus and make their way by a winding trail to the homestead, after going by Callious. By the time Leah reached this trail, dusk was falling and Teddy shied at something; stepped sideways, and stumbled. Leah was thrown off and the horse fell on her, the saddle horn sticking into her stomach. Somehow she managed to get back on the horse and reach home. By this time, her stomach was swollen and getting black and blue. She was vomiting and passing blood, but she said not a word to the others. It all came out later. She gradually stopped bleeding, and was able to catch her train, as planned, and go to Saskatoon, and get started on the nurse's course.

In the meantime, our sister, Ida's marriage had broken up, and she had to go to work. She sent her two children, Dorothy and Donalda who were 7 and 4 years old, home to Mother to look after for the time being. The two girls liked their new home very much, and things went along smoothly until some time in the winter; Mother slipped on the icy path and fell, breaking her wrist.

Her cries brought out Dad. He realized he would have to set it as they could not take her 28 miles to the nearest Doctor, in Grande Prairie, during a storm. So, he found two straight sticks; set the bone where he thought it was right, and putting the sticks on each side of her wrist, bound it up tightly with long pieces of cloth to make a bandage. Mother was pretty tough, in the ordeal, and didn't moan much, but she sure suffered a lot afterwards, while the wrist was knitting. She tried to carry out her usual household duties, but found it impossible. Dad and Ernie helped as much as they could, and as spring gradually came, Mother's wrist improved and she could move it without too much pain. She was never one to complain. The bone did heal, although her wrist had a slight bow, it was not crooked. Dad's surgery, performed without benefit of anesthetic, or x-ray, resulted in a better job than I have seen some modern doctors do.

The men folks were busy on the land, putting in the crop, when more bad luck came, in the form of letters from Leah. She had become ill and the doctors advised her to quit the course, and return home. After a stomach operation in Grande Prairie hospital, she went back to the farm to recuperate.

The following year, another addition to the family took place. Toots Mireault's marriage broke up and he brought Calvin, aged 9 months, to Mother, who agreed to raise him. So the pitter patter of baby's footsteps, were heard in the Poirier household once more, and Mother began the task of raising a second family.

Poor Leah never improved very much after her operation, and she stayed at home, trying to help in any way she could, with the household chores. It was at that time, that she related to us how the horse fell on her, and that was the beginning of all her troubles. Finally, in 1928, the doctors advised her to go to Edmonton, where they, too, operated on her.

That same spring, I returned from Ft. William, for a vacation with my folks. I visited Leah and Mother in Edmonton, and then went home. Ernie and Dad were glad to see me, as they were tired of house work. While there, I met and married, Murray Skinner, the teacher at Lindsay School.

Two years later, Leah, who had returned home and was getting steadily worse, was advised to go to Rochester, Minnesota, for another operation. What grand neighbours we had in those early days, and what a help and source of comfort! Robideaus, Smashnuks, Menards, Albinatis, LaValleys, Moodys, Stewarts, and many others. I must not forget, Joe Newman, who was courting Leah.

Once more, the neighbourhood came to the rescue. A big benefit dance was staged at the Bezanson Community Hall, and the whole country was there. Leah, who did very fine needle work, had crocheted various articles, and these were raffled. By the magnificent work of everybody, the sum of over five hundred dollars was raised; enough to pay her fare to Rochester and the doctors. It was all in vain, as a telegram came informing us of her death on July 1, 1930. She was buried in the Grande Prairie cemetery.

I remained in Grande Prairie for a few more years, but then my husband became ill and we moved East to recuperate.

Mother, Dad and Ernie remained on the farm and raised Dorothy, Donalda and Calvin.

By this time, Ernie had acquired an old Maxwell car of the same vintage as Jack Benny's pride and joy. It was Alex Hermisten who decided to buy the Maxwell when Ernie put it up for sale. But there was one catch to the deal. Ernie would have to teach Alex to drive.

So Ernie got him ensconced behind the steering wheel and explained all the controls to him. They started out from Robideaus, going across the trails towards Callious and the homestead. Everything was fine until they reached the gully, a steep hill near Callious. The trail led down one side, across a narrow bridge and up the other, at the top of which was a barb wire gate looped over a post. Going down the hill Alex must have gotten his wires crossed because he gave it more gas, instead of pressing on the brake. The car was gaining speed and Alex leaned back and gripped the wheel in a real death lock. "Whoa", he hollered, trying to pull the wheel back towards him like a pair of reins, "Whoa"!

Ernie grabbed the wheel and turned it to avoid hitting the gate, and turned off the key. From that time on, Alex stuck to horses, and Ernie sold the car to someone else.

Life went on. Lots of hard work and disappointments and joys too. Each year, something happened to prevent them from getting a real good crop; maybe one in seven years.

So, in 1940, they sold the farm to Tom LaValley and moved to Wetaskiwin, Alberta, where I was now living.

But by this time, World War II was being fought and Ernie joined the army. Dorothy and Donalda were both married; Dorothy to Wilfred Ringle, and Donalda to Paul Lewis. Later, Calvin joined the army, and that left Mother and Dad alone. My husband was transferred to Fort William to work in a plane factory, so I persuaded Mother and Dad to come to Fort William too, where they made their home with Ida, Mrs. James Douglas, for their remaining years.

Dad died in 1949, following a cancer operation, while Mother lived nine more years. They are both buried at Thunder Bay, Ont.

Mother used to say that, although they had had a great deal of bad luck, heartache and sorrow in Bezanson, she thought they were the best years of her life. Mostly on account of the good people who were her friends. And, in her last years, she missed the Peace River Country.

WILLIAM RAISON

William Raison and family, came to this area in 1917. He was Mr. George Amireaux's stepson.

In 1917, he filed on N.E. 36-72-3 W6th. He left before proving up his homestead.

MR. AND MRS. OSCAR J. REGNIER

Fifty-eight years ago this month, my late husband and I came to this Peace River country. My husband, Oscar J. Regnier, and his father, had filed in 1916, then went to southern Alberta. They filed on the N.W. ½ of 35-72-3 W6th, and I am still living there. We were both born in South Dakota, U.S.A. We were married in Edmonton in 1918. That spring, when we left Edmonton for this great country, the train was so crowded, you would think we were heading for a gold mine.

The old Edson Trail runs through one of our quarters — N.W. of 27-72-3 W6th.

We hauled mail, from Glen Leslie to Kleskun Hill, for some time. Mrs. Bryenton tended the Glen Leslie post office, and Mrs. Tempest, the Kleskun Hill post office. Later, we had the Smoky River post office at Rooney's store, across the road from us. When Rooneys moved to the highway, so did the post office, which then became the Bezanson post office.

My husband and I snowshoed to Art Howe's one Christmas Day, and had roast rabbit for dinner.

We went to Kleskun Hill to get white clay to mud our log house. It was very good for that purpose.

My husband had a wood-sawing outfit, and sawed for many neighbours to supplement our income. He also managed roadworking equipment, and crew (with fresnos) to work out taxes. All water-wells were dug by hand. My husband passed away in November, 1956.

I have three children:

Mrs. Velva MacArthur (teacher and farmer's wife).

Wallace A. D. Regnier (farming).



Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Regnier.

Mrs. Carol Harrington (also on the farm, and in construction work). They were all born here on the homestead.

I have six grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Homesteading was not easy, but you don't mind too much when you are young. I am now eighty-two years old, and retired.

ART AND GALDYS REES

Art Rees, youngest son of Maredith and Jean Rees' family of six boys and two girls, was born on November 2, 1904, in the coal mining town of Staylittle, Montgomeryshire, Wales. This is where Art went to school and, later, worked in the coal mines.

Guill Lloyde, from Ponoka, Alberta, was visiting in Wales and during a mine strike, in January of 1928, persuaded Art to come to Canada, where he worked on the Lloyd farm.

In 1930, Art went to Sexsmith to visit his cousin, Harry Morgan, and then went to work for the local farmers. In Sexsmith, Art met Gladys Peckham and they were married, June 19, 1936, at the home of Ed Peckham in Bezanson.

Art and Gladys rented the Peckham farm, which

they later bought. They lived in a little house that they rented from Lewis McLaughlin.

Like most farm families at that time, there was not much income and the work was hard. Art did own a Ford Coup car, but found it too expensive to run, so he traded it for one horse, which he really needed. Water was also a big problem for the Reeses. For years, Art hauled water in a barrel, from a spring down on the Smoky river bank.

There were two girls born here; Janet, in June of 1943, and Gwen in July of 1944.

In the winters of 1944 and 1945, Art moved the family to Moons mill where he worked to supplement his farm income. Art also spent a summer working for a road building crew.

In 1946, the little house, and all their belongings, was destroyed by fire. Art then built a new house, on his own land, where they still live today.

Over the years, Art and Gladys were very active in the community; serving on the school board, the hall committee and as members of the curling club.

Janet and Gwen took their elementary schooling in Bezanson, then went to high school in Grande Prairie, and stayed at the Wapiti Lodge.

Art and Gladys grain farmed and raised beef cattle until 1975, when they retired.

Dale Woolsey, of Melfort, Sask., third youngest of a family of eight boys and three girls, came to Alberta, in 1958, to work in the oilfields. Living a transit life of an oilworker, Dale came to Bezanson, in 1961, where he met and, in 1962, married Janet Rees. They then went to Rocky Mt. House to work. This is where their first son, David, was born in July of 1963. Dale and Janet returned to Bezanson to live and here Marilyn was born, in April of 1966, and Ken in November of 1970. They bought land in Bezanson and, with rented land, started farming.

Gwen took her high school, then went to Edmonton to take nursing aid training. She worked in Edmonton for two years. Then married Larry Loewen, a farm boy, from Crooked Creek, Alberta. They have three children; Glenda, born in January of 1966, Maurene, born in August of 1968 and Bradley, born in May of 1970. The Loewen family now live on their farm at Debolt, Alberta.

EDWIN AND FLORENCE ROBIDEAU AND FAMILY

Edwin (Ed) Robideau was born to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Robideau, in Bemidji, Minnesota, in 1880. He attended school and, in his teen years, helped in his father's tavern in Bemidji. In his twenties, he left for Minneapolis, where he was employed in a large steel factory for the next six or seven years.

It was here, that he met Florence Moberg. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Moberg, had emigrated from Sweden to Minneapolis, Minn., in the latter part of the 1800's. Florence was born in that city, and there she received her education. On December 15, 1915, Ed and Florence were married.

In 1917, this young couple came, with the Robideau families, to Canada, to prove up the homestead that brother, Irving, had filed on, by proxy, for them, in



Five generations — Florence holding great-great-grandson Jason, granddaughter Bernice, great-granddaughter Sandy and daughter Bea — 1976.

1916. After a long eight day journey by train, they arrived in Grande Prairie, Alberta.

Ed became employed by Alex Wishart, as drayman, and they found a place to live. Although wages were fairly low, there were plenty of jobs available in this fast growing town. Florence, Nellie LaValley and Lucy Rooney (who were new arrivals from Minn., U.S.A.) became very close friends; a friendship which lasted throughout the remaining years. That fall, when the first Rooney and LaValley baby girls arrived, Florence was there to help take care of the two young mothers and new babies. The following August, Florence and Ed's daughter, Beatrice, was born.

During the winter and early spring of 1919, the Flu was still prevalent in Grande Prairie. The young mothers took care of the sick, while their husbands pitched in to cut wood, build fires and carry drinking water to aid friends and neighbors, who were too sick to perform these household duties.

In the spring of 1919, Ed and Florence and baby Beatrice, moved to their homestead, S.E. 14-72-3 W6th, one half mile east of the present Bezanson post office, and on the north side of the pavement, which in those days, was only a rough dirt trail. They built a log house, cleared the brush and broke some ground. They planted a garden and purchased some livestock.

When it came to gardening, there was much rivalry among the young Robideau wives and sisters-in-law. One summer, Catherine boasted of her lovely, large, new potatoes. Florence and Mabel, while Catherine



Ed and Florence, Beatrice and Louise Robideau.

and Irving were visiting friends nearby, decided to investigate. The two culprits, out of sheer devilment, proceeded to filch a small pail of potatoes for their Sunday supper. On her return, Catherine was mystified and alarmed to find three rows of potatoes missing. When she inquired, Mabel and Florence explained, "In this north country, the woods are full of wild spud hounds. You're darn lucky it was only a small pack or they would have eaten your whole potato patch." For a short time, Catherine believed this yarn. (The phantom hounds exist yet today, for only three years ago, the McNally's potato patch was mysteriously cleaned out.)

The Ed Robideau home was a haven, to weary travelers and freighters, in the early days, especially during the winter months. The cold, drifted miles of road, from Valleyview, Sturgeon Lake and Debolt, to Grande Prairie, caused many teams to become exhausted. A tired outfit would pull into the Robideau yard; Ed would stable and feed these horses on numerous occasions during those years. The driver would be given a hot meal, a visit and a corner to roll out his bedroll.

Aunt Florence, as she has always been called by the LaValley and Rooney children, often rode herd on this gang of kids, while the mothers went to shop or visit in Grande Prairie. Her gentle discipline, and warm sense of humor, made this event a real 'fun day' for the kids.

Ed was a quiet, soft-spoken man, who loved children. The younger generation soon adopted him as their own Uncle Ed. He was a loyal friend and a good neighbor. The people of this district were saddened by his early death on August 17, 1928. This was the second



Bud and Florence Gallant, Raymond, Audrey, Louise and Beatrice.

tragedy to strike, for in October of 1926, diphtheria had claimed the life of their little son, Bertie.

Ed and Florence had five children: Audrey (Mrs. John Newman) lives in Minneapolis, Minn., U.S.A. Beatrice (Mrs. Jim Fells) of Bezanson, Alberta. Albert Robideau (deceased). Louise (Mrs. Herman Kimble) lives at Crystal Creek, Alta. Ray married Jean Coney. They live at Crystal Creek.

Florence and the children remained on the homestead. On November 9th, 1929, she married Bud Gallant.

Bud was born and raised in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. In his early teens, he found jobs on river boats; later, he worked his way across Canada to Vancouver, B.C. He was employed around the West province for years. In Vancouver, Bud met Tom Mould, and they worked together on various jobs. In 1927, Bud and Tom decided to come to Northern Alberta to obtain a good trapline. Their first territory was north of Goodwin, in the Puskwaskau area. Fred Mabbit joined the two trappers, and they trapped this region, every winter, until 1938. Bud and Tom went into the Fort Nelson area, where they acquired new traplines along the Liard River, which they worked until 1945, when Bud sold out and returned to Bezanson to farm. The homestead was sold to Oscar Albinati during that year.

Bud and Florence purchased Grandpa Robideau's homestead. Bud farmed there for a few years, then he became camp attendant for Western Oil Co., until 1967, when he retired. Their farm was bought by Charlie and Louise Moody. Bud retained six acres on which their home is located.

On November 9, 1976. Bud and Florence celebrated their 47th wedding anniversary with an open house luncheon for family and friends.

THE ERNIE ROBIDEAU FAMILY

Ernie came to Canada in April 1917 with his dad, mother, brothers and sisters, coming from Inter-

national Falls, Minnesota, U.S.A. They settled at Bezanson, Ernie homesteaded the N.E. 14-72-3-W6. He continued to live with his folks and farmed with his dad and brothers for a number of years. In 1934 he married Peggy Coney from the Fitzsimmons district, she had come from Scotland with her folks in 1928. From this marriage were seven children, one boy and six girls. When they became of school age the first six started at the Lindsay school, then later went to Bezanson. After grade 9, they went to high school in Grande Prairie.

Rita the oldest daughter married Ray Boyer in 1953 and lived in Grande Prairie, where they still reside. They have three boys. Allan married Kay Broughton from Grande Prairie in 1958. They lived in Grande Prairie for a few years then moved to Peace River, where Alan is in business. They have five children, three girls and two boys. Nancy passed away tragically in 1952 and this was one of the heartaches we endured. Betty married Alan Fenton in 1959. They lived at Bezanson for a time, then moved to Grande Prairie and from there to St. Albert. Their family consists of four children, two boys and two girls. Joan wed Elmer Ford of Bezanson. They are living there with their family of two children, a boy and a girl. Joyce married Wayne Stanley in 1962. They lived in Grande Prairie for a short time and are now in B.C. Three children came from their marriage, two boys and a girl. Terry Ann married Edwin Hildebraud from Manitoba in 1975. They are attending a university in Winnipeg. Ernie passed away in 1960.

IRVIN AND CATHERINE ROBIDEAU

Irvin Robideau came to Grande Prairie in April of 1916, on one of the first trains. He filed on the N.E.¼ 12-72-3 W6th, the quarter where Mr. and Mrs. Bob Hunter now reside. He worked around Grande Prairie for awhile, then returned to International Falls. He worked in a candy factory for Dan Holler and later became a paper hanger and carpenter in the Falls. It was there he met the pretty Catherine Terry from South Dakota, married and brought her north to homestead in the Lindsay district.

Catherine fixed their log cabin into a very pretty and comfortable home. They farmed, raised large gardens and grew beautiful flowers. This nice couple lived a quiet life, enjoyed visitors, music and playing cards. Although they had no children of their own, Irvin was very much a favorite with the 'small fry', especially around Christmas time, for he made scads of yummy homemade toffee, holiday candy and chocolates for his little friends.

During the late twenties and thirties, Irvin went back to carpenter work for Pat and Lucy Rooney and for others in the community.

When the Lindsay school opened, the teacher, Harvey Newton, boarded with them. Catherines' younger brother, Harold Terry, came to live with them and attended the new school for a year before returning to the U.S.A.

In the mid-forties, Irvin and Catherine left for South Dakota to retire. Irvin passed away at home in July, 1951. Catherine died seven years later in Oct., 1958.



Left to right: Mr. and Mrs. Fred Dewhurst, Catherine and Irving Robideau.

PETER ROBIDEAU

Peter S. Robideau was born in 1858. His wife, Sophia, was born a year later. They were married in 1879. They had eleven children, Irving, Earl, Roy, Edward, Ernie, Stella, Lillian, Thelma, Hattie, Mable and Alex.



Grandpa and Grandma Peter Robideau on their 60th anniversary — 1939.



Prairie Sod Busters — 1918. Left to right: Irvin, Catherine, Roy, Mabel, and Peter Robideau.

They came to the Peace River country in April of 1917, and homesteaded at Bezanson, on the S.E. 13-72-3 W6th. With them, came four sons who also homesteaded close by. Lester J. Nellis (Moose), who was married to their daughter Stella, also came with them. Besides the married ones, there were three daughters and one son, unmarried, who were living at home. One son, Earl was killed in the First World War.

In 1939 they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

ROY JOHN ROBIDEAU

Roy was born, at Stanley, Wisconsin, November 26, 1889. His parents were Sophia and Peter Robideau.

At an early age, his family moved to Great Falls, Montana. When he was 14, they moved to Cash Lake, Minnesota, and a year later to Bemidji, Minn. In 1905, they moved again to International Falls. His parents farmed there 'till April, 1917, when the whole family moved to Bezanson, Alberta. Roy homesteaded S.E. 12-72-3 W6th. He worked in Grande Prairie until the spring of 1918, when he joined the army and went overseas in the First World War.

He came home from overseas, in October, 1919. Not alone, however, as he had married an English girl, Margaret Ann Hague. Her father was a marine

Roy and Margaret were married on July 19, 1919. They lived for a year with Mr. and Mrs. Willis, and for a while with Roy's folks. They moved to their homestead in 1921, where they farmed and raised a family of four boys and one girl. Peter, Alfred, Leo, Ernie and Amelia, were born between 1920 and 1926.

Roy had a soldier's grant and through this, got a quarter section of land, the N.E. 24-72-3 W6th. He also later homesteaded another quarter which was called a second homestead. He broke a few acres on it and later sold it to Fred Sedore for a bottle of whisky and a box of chocolates.

Roy, Margaret and family lived very humbly, but were happy in spite of the hard times that came in the depression years from 1929 to the late thirties. Wood stoves kept the place warm. Wood was plentiful, but also hard work to cut, haul, saw in stove lengths, split, then carry into the house to burn; no conveniences like the 1970's! The water supply was acquired by melting snow in winter and cutting and hauling ice from the Smoky or Wapiti rivers, packing it in sawdust to keep it from melting and melting it in the summer for water.

Margaret says, there was always lots to do on a homestead; milking cows, helping in the field, cooking, keeping the house and raising the children. They went to school at Lindsay, which is now part of the Bezanson consolidated district.

The main grain that was grown, to sell, was Marquis and Garnet wheat. In 1929, wheat was only worth 29 cents a bushel. It cost 10 cents a bushel to thresh it, besides the cost of growing, cutting with a binder and stooking it, which didn't leave much to live on. There was a flour mill at Sexsmith, Alta., about 30 miles or more, where you could take some wheat to be made into flour. The mill kept half of it to pay for grinding and making the flour. You brought back your share in bran, shorts, wheatlets and flour.

In 1930, Roy took eight pigs to Clairmont, where he sold them for three dollars a piece, to Frank Rothwell a livestock buyer.

In 1931, Roy brought Slim Claberry home with him from Calgary. Slim lived with them for two months and then went to work for Rex Patterson and later Alf Moon. When Slim and his wife, Tillie, got married, they had their wedding supper at Roy and Margarets'. For a wedding present they gave them two young sow pigs and six chickens. In homesteading days, these were the kind of things that were given; something towards a start in farming.

When the second world war came, 1939-1945, Roy, again, became active in it. For 1½ years, he was an orderly in the hospital of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps, at the barracks, in Grande Prairie, Alta., and then was a Veteran Guard. Two of their sons joined the army, Peter and Alfred, and one, Leo, was in the airforce.

After the war, in 1946, Roy managed a softball team for a year. He had a half ton truck, which he used to transport the boys to games in Clairmont, and other places, besides to home games. Some of the boys who played were: Jerry Moodie, Barney McNally, and Donnie and Jackie McLaughlin.

In 1952, Roy and Margaret retired and built a nice comfortable little lumber home on their son, Alfred's farm. This land was once called a school section (N.E. 11-72-3 W6th). They are still living on this farm.

In 1969, on July 19th, they celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary, with a lawn party, by thier house, with all their family, and many neighbors, present.

Roy sold his soldier grant quarter, to Tom Burt, and his homestead to son, Peter, who later sold it to Ray McMillan, who then sold to Robert Hunter.

Their son, Peter, married Evelyn Wilburn of Debolt, and have four children: Jerry, Russell, John and Dennis. Peter now lives at Okatooks, Alberta. Alfred married Anita Peterson of Debolt. Anita had two girls, Carol and Carmen Stanley, from her first marriage. She and Alf had nine children, six girls and three boys. Butch, Lynda, Yvonne, Eunice, Eric, Alice, Ira, Carmen and Darlene. Anita died in 1974, just before Christmas.

In the fall of 1975, Alf married Yvette Benson. She has eleven children by her first marriage. Alf is the only one of the boys who lives in Bezanson.

Leo married Edith Stevens, from Vancouver, B.C. They had five children; 1 boy, Richard, and four girls, Marlene, Linda, Cheryl and Della. They live in Oregon, U.S.A.

Ernie married Marjorie Coney. They had six children, three girls and three boys; Cindy, Denise, Valerie, Lyle, Dale and Dean. They lived for a time in Grande Prairie and now most of them are in Edmonton, Alta. Amelia married Ben Shultz. Ben's first wife had a son Kenneth and died at childbirth. Ben and Amelia had two girls, Brenda and Sylvia. They are living at Demmitt, Alta., where they are running a store.

THE PAT ROONEYS

Mr. and Mrs. Pat Rooney were married in International Falls, Minnesota, in 1916. The following year,



Mr. and Mrs. Pat and Lucy Rooney.



P. G. Rooney, Smoky River post office and store — 1920-30.

they decided to come to the Peace River country and take up some of the homestead land that the Canadian Government was advertising so widely. They, along with Mr. and Mrs. Tom LaValley, arrived in Grande Prairie in May of 1917, over the less than a year old, E.D. and B.C. railroad. The first three years, except for a short period spent in the Rio Grande district, the two families lived and worked at different jobs in Grande Prairie. Then, in 1920, having filed on a homestead three miles north of what is now Bezanson, Pat moved his wife and two young daughters out to their new log home. The LaValleys filed on land nearby; and later Mrs. Rooney's and Mrs. LaValley's brother, Bill Baker, and their father, Joseph Baker, were to take up homesteads in the same area.

The only roads were wagon trails, which meandered across the land, mostly taking the lines of least resistance.

Shortly after arriving at their new home, the Rooneys started a store, a much needed feature in the district, as more and more families moved into the area. Some time later, a new Post Office was started in the store, and Mrs. Rooney became its first, and only, Post-mistress. The post office was called "Smoky River". Before its beginning, all the surrounding area was served by the Kleskun Hill Post Office, run by Mr. and Mrs. George Tempest.

During those early years, many of the men used to join the threshing crews in the fall to augment their incomes. There was also much trading back and forth of labor, on a "I'll help you with that job if you'll help me with this" level. I imagine that the farmers who worked on the threshing rigs took out part of their pay by having their own crops threshed. Whenever Pat went threshing, a couple of rainy days would usually mean a quick trip to Grande Prairie by team and wagon for a load of groceries for the store.



P. G. Rooney store and post office at Crooked Creek.

In due course, a school was built near the LaValley and Moody homes. It was named Lindsay School, and all eight grades were taught there. The school also became the social center for the district; meetings, dances, sports days, picnics, etc.

By 1926, three more children had been born to the Rooneys' another two girls and a boy. Neither the living quarters nor the store area were adequate any more, so the Rooneys decided to move three miles south to the main road. It connected the settlements of Calais, DeBolt, Goodwin, etc., with Grande Prairie, and by that time was a regular graded road, at least the part west from the top of the Smoky River hill.

The new store, with living quarters at the back and bedrooms above, was built of logs also. But they were logs which had originally been the walls of the school in the "old Bezanson townsite", on the banks of the Smoky River, south and east of the present Bezanson.

The Smoky River post office merged with the Bezanson post office and Mrs. Rooney became the Postmistress of the new enlarged post office district, which retained the name Bezanson. The old store building on the homestead served as a home for "Mexican Jack" Havercost for a while, then was used as a granary for the wheat crops which the farm still produced each year.

Many changes took place over the next twenty years. Three more children arrived; another boy and two more girls, bringing the total to eight. The building became a stopping place for the mail haulers, freight haulers, and the farmers, from across the Smoky, who hauled their grain into the elevators in Grande Prairie. Travel in winter time was still by horses and sleighs as snow plows were unheard of in that part of the country. So there were many nights when the building would be "bulging at the seams" with people who stopped overnight, had supper and breakfast, and then were on their way again. Some were strangers, some were regulars, but they usually liked to have a game of cards, or listen to the radio, or even just sit around and talk and smoke for a while before going to bed.

Additions and renovations to the buildings went on over the years, with the store and post office finally being housed in a large addition, built on to the west side of the building. This newest part had a regular basement under it, and eventually a furnace was installed and the basement was used as much needed warehouse space. The old original log building was modernized and became all living area.

Roads were being upgraded all this time, and traffic increasing. The war years curtailed this somewhat, but with the building of the Alaska Highway, large convoys of U.S. Army vehicles were frequent sights. Once a convoy of 28 trucks stopped to get gassed up at 3 a.m. Needless to say, the gas supply truck had to be phoned to come out from Grande Prairie with a new supply first thing next morning!

After the war, Co-operative stores became very popular. Bezanson residents formed a Co-op society, and, in the autumn of 1946, the Rooneys sold their business to the Co-op. Mr. and Mrs. Rooney, along with those of their children still living at home, moved to Grande Prairie. Pat did a bit of buying and selling of houses, bought a couple of houses and rented them out; but still wanted to get back into some kind of business. He made a trip to the Okanagan Valley of B.C. in early winter of 1947, and was impressed by the beauty and milder climate of the area. In the summer of 1948, the family moved to B.C. and bought a store in Westbank, just across the lake from Kelowna. They owned this for about four and a half years, but the management of it was done by Bill Duffy, the husband of the Rooney's eldest daughter.

Mrs. Rooney passed away, while the family still owned the Westbank store, in May of 1951. In December of 1952, the store was sold to local interest, and Pat retired from the store business for good. He lived in Kelowna, did quite a bit of traveling, and took occasional "leaps" into the real estate field. In October of 1955, he married Mrs. Christina Sinclair, a widow, who had been an old timer of Fairview before



From top, left to right: Bill Duffy, Virginia, Marie, Donald (Bud), Pat, Ilene, Lucy and Mona Rooney. Bruce and Connie Rooney in front.

retiring to Kelowna. They both liked to travel, and made several trips back to the north and also to the States, to visit friends and relatives. It was on one of these trips, to visit friends in Pat's birthplace of DePere, Wisconsin, that Pat became ill, was hospitalized for several weeks, and died on October 30th, 1962. He was brought back to Kelowna and buried, beside his first wife, Lucie. Tina, the second Mrs. Rooney, lives in a senior citizens home in Richmond, B.C.

Of the Rooney's eight children, seven are living. Their oldest son Donald, always known as Bud, was killed, while serving with the R.H.L.I. in France, on August 12, 1944. He had just had his 21st birthday in July. Of the others, three live in Kelowna; Mrs. Bill Yochim (Connie), Mrs. Eric Fazan (Mona), and Mrs. Bill Duffy (Ilene). Dorothy (Mrs. Jim Rasmussen) became a U.S. citizen and lives in Littlefork, Minnesota. Bruce and his wife, Marlene, live in Blairmore, Alberta, and Marie (Mrs. Bob Moss) lives in Calgary. Virginia (Mrs. Roy Duffy), the only one of the children still living in the Peace River country, is in Grande Prairie.

Pat and Lucie Rooney had 31 grandchildren, and there are 15 great-grandchildren to date. The family name is not carried by any of them, as Bruce, the only living son, had one child, a girl, who is now married.

MEMORIES OF DAYS GONE BY

While we were still living at Smoky River Post Office (Dad's homestead) we had two bachelor friends who lived to the west of us. They were "Mac" MacEachern and Frank Flannery. I remember that they used to come for Sunday dinner and we kids, young as we were, used to enjoy their company too. I think we used to go across their quarters to get to the old Kleskun Hill Catholic Church, which was about three miles west of us. I remember what a treat it was

for us to be allowed to ride home after church on Sunday with Father Serrand in his Essex.

The first family car Dad bought was a large second-hand touring model, with side curtains to snap on when it was cold or rainy. It had a regular horn, but also an exhaust whistle, which sounded like a high pitched steam whistle. We were always pestering Dad to use it, and would be absolutely delighted when he did — we would get the extra bonus of seeing all the cattle and horses within sight throw up their heads and race off across the pastures in pure panic.

One fond memory is of going to the old Lindsay School (2½ miles) over the years with the Fords, who used to stop and pick us up. They used a democrat in summer, a sleigh in winter, drawn by a team of "buckskins" who could be very ornery on occasion. With the size of the Ford family, and of ours, and eight grades being taught, I imagine Old Buck and Young Buck must have been hauling at least a dozen kids back and forth to school every day.

Sometime in the early 30s, Dad filed on another homestead in the Crooked Creek area. He built a fairly large store and living quarters and over the years several different people worked for him there — some in the store and some helping to run the farm. Two daughters, Marie and Dorothy ran the store for their father for quite some time.

Dorothy joined the C.W.A.C. and served as a postal clerk in Ottawa during the latter part of the war.

Marie at one time was Postmistress for Crooked Creek also. Eventually the store and the farm were both sold. Several years later the store and living quarters were completely burned down, but I believe the old barn is still standing.

All of the Rooney "children" go back to visit in Grande Prairie and district from time to time; it is almost 29 years since we left there. But each time we go, there are fewer of the "old timers" left, more of the old landmarks gone, and changes everywhere one looks. The only thing that remains the same, is the friendliness, the kindness, and the genuine gladness of our old friends, to see us again!

THE STEVE SARMAGA FAMILY

In 1906, Steve's father brought his family to Canada from an area that is now in Poland but was then under Austria. They settled near Sifton, Manitoba on land they bought because homesteads were no longer available there.



Steve Sarmaga and son, John — 1921.

Steve, being the oldest in the family went out working for other farmers, worked at jobs around Winnipeg and helped build the railroad between Edmonton and Whitecourt.

When Martin Boyarchuck and sons-in-law Mike Hawryluk and Nick Kochalyk and their families came to the Peace River country, Steve came with them and they all homesteaded in the Bezanson area.

In the spring of 1918, Mary Boyarchuck and brothers Charlie and John brought the livestock and machinery. While awaiting train connections in Edmonton, Charlie sold Mary's chickens and turkeys without her knowledge and later he told her. He did so because they were too noisy and smelly. That summer Steve and Mary were married in Grande Prairie.

Steve, with the help of brother-in-law, Charlie, got out a set of building logs for a house. He lit the grass around the log pile in order to make a fireguard, but the fire got away and the logs burnt up. Charlie was so disgusted he went home and wouldn't help get out any more logs.

The homestead became their home where they raised three children John, Stan, and Anna. In 1963, they retired to Grande Prairie. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1968. They moved into the Swan Haven Nursing Home in 1972 where they are living at the present time.

John spent his early years farming, trucking and in the armed forces. He got his start in farming when his father gave him the N.E.¼ of ?-72-? R.3. Later he bought the Amireaux farm from George Laverick. John married Sadie Gaboury and they raised five children.

Maxine (Mrs. Dennis Maxwell) has two sons, Tommy and Rudy. Maxine and Dennis both teach at the Harry Balfour school in Grande Prairie, while residing on a farm at Bezanson.

Donna (Mrs. Louis Bedard) has one daughter, Michelle. Donna and Louis work in Grande Prairie and also reside on a farm in Bezanson.

Grant of Bella Coola, B.C. does carpenter work.

Gene farms with his dad and works on an oil rig.

Audrey lives in Grande Prairie and is a secretary at the Proctor and Gamble pulp mill.

Stan worked at Fitzpatrick's sawmill, then spent seven winters as an edgerman at Herchel's mill while farming with his father during the summer. He also worked on the Pine Pass highway. He married Juanita Herrick of Woking and they live on the home farm. They have three children.

Gary works for Alberta Government Telephones.

Donnie is attending N.A.I.T. in Edmonton taking a Lab Technician's course.

Gayle is taking her Grade XII in Sexsmith.

Anna became a nurse's aid and worked in the Royal Alex in Edmonton for a number of years. She married Bob Herrick of Woking where they farmed till Bob's death in November 1976.

MR. AND MRS. HARRY SEVERSON

In 1915, Mr. and Mrs. Severson came to this country, from the United States, via the Edson Trail. Harry filed on the N.E. 10-72-3 W6th, in the spring of 1916, and built a house, 24' x 24', of hued logs, topped with a

shingled cottage roof. This solid building was home to many couples during the passing years. The Ernie Fords, Harold Fords, Proffits and others, have lived in it. It was occupied until the late 1960's, when it was demolished.

Harry Severson was the first Sec. Treasurer for the Lindsay School, newly built, in 1921. At this time, he was also Reeve and Councillor for our district.

This young couple took an active part in the community's social life.

Mrs. Severson saved many bachelors, of this area, from a steady diet of sourdough pancakes and bannock, for from her kitchen they could purchase lovely large loaves of homebaked bread, cookies and cakes. During the summer she would pick gallons of wild fruit, which became the fillings for the delicious pies she sold to her customers.

She trapped muskrats each spring for extra income. Once she made the mistake of relating, to friends, a certain trapping episode. Seems while she was removing the fifth (out-of-season) rat from a trap, she heard a horse and rider approaching the slough. She feared being caught red-handed with the illegal plunder, so hastily shoved the cold, wet, furry carcasses down the front of her overalls. The rider, unaware of her presence, rode on by. Mrs. Severson received much friendly teasing over this incident for some time.

In true pioneer spirit, she volunteered her help when neighbors became ill, and was mid-wife to many young mothers during those days. She was active in the early church organizations and did her share of sewing and remaking clothing for families in need.

Mr. and Mrs. Severson rented out their land for a few years, then sold it to Ernie Ford, in 1924, and shortly afterwards left our community.

MURRAY SKINNER — TEACHER AT LINDSAY SCHOOL — 1927-30

Picture a young, single, male school teacher with just two years experience under his belt gained in a small country school near Alcomdale, Alberta, which was about 40 miles from Edmonton. The year was 1927, and the month was July. Herman Trelle, of Wembley, Alberta, in the Peace River country, had won the World's championship in wheat for two years running and had put the Peace River country on the map. Everyone was talking about it in the west, and there were many romantic tales told about the fabulous Peace River Country. Even the names 'Peace' and 'Grande Prairie' had a rather romantic ring to them.

So, the young teacher, I, Murray Skinner, decided to see this new country, before returning to my native Nova Scotia, and made my way down to the Legislative Buildings, in Edmonton, where the Department of Education was located.

After a short interview, I was told to go to Grande Prairie, a two day trip, on the E.D. and B.C. Railway. Then, I was to catch a ride to Bezanson, 20 miles East, where I could contact Zotique Menard and Tom Burt, two members of the Lindsay School Board, who would probably hire me.



Mr. and Mrs. Murray Skinner.

The trip to Grande Prairie was uneventful and tiring. I had a day's wait at the Murray Hotel before being able to catch a ride with the mail-man to Rooney's store in Bezanson. This ride, in a buggy drawn by two horses, was a long one, and rough, as there were many ruts and bumps; but I enjoyed it anyway as the mail-man was good company.

Upon arrival at Rooney's, I was fortunate to meet Zotique Menard, a man who, obviously, got a great kick out of life. We set out for his homestead, by winding prairie trail, passing Lindsay School on the way. I caught my first glimpse of the school, teacherage and barn. Soon afterward, we arrived at Zotique's log house where I was welcomed by his wonderful wife, Margaret, a large woman, both in body and heart, and Paul, about 5 or 6, who was ready to start school. (This was one of the first log houses I had ever seen).

My host was ready to give me a job, but said I would have to see Tom Burt, so he showed me where Tom lived. I made my way over to Burt's hill and found the Burt family. After having supper with them and quite a lengthy questioning by Tom, I was officially hired and we all signed the contract which was for the princely sum of $1000 per year.

Shortly after September 1st, school opened and I was confronted with around 50 children, later swelling to 72, aged 6 to 16 and all grades from 1 to 8. They arrived by walking, a few on bicycles, and some by buggy or horse-back. The horses were put in the barn.

I moved into the teacherage and "batched" for one year. I didn't particularly like this life but enjoyed the fellowship of Billy Baker, Wes Brewer, Johnny Boyartchuk and Ernie Robideau, to name a few.

Some time in March of 1928, a dance was held at

Lindsay School, on a Friday night and this one became a very special one for me.

Imagine the scene; lots of snow on the ground and people arriving, by sleigh, from miles around, with sleigh bells tinkling in the frosty air. Whole families, (no baby sitters in those days), babies and children came too. The double desks were pushed to one side and the space in the middle used for dancing. A couple of gasoline lamps, with their continuous hissing, provided illumination. If it was a bit dark in the corners, who cared? Music was provided mainly by a fiddle, Ernie Ford being the man with the bow, and a fine fiddler he was. He would play by the hour, and then be relieved by Ernie Poirier, Martha's brother, who could certainly be depended upon to play some sweet waltzes, such as; Springtime in the Rockies, Over the Waves, and Peek-a-Boo. Harold Ford helped out on the banjo.

Around midnight, the ladies would serve lunch. All this time, coffee had been brewing in a big boiler, and each family had brought enough lunch for themselves. It was all put together and served to the people sitting in desks. It was a great evening for the many bachelors who were tired of their own company and cooking.

I had met Martha Poirier, a young lady who was home on vacation visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Poirier, and we were busy getting acquainted. After lunch, the dance continued and, if my memory is not playing tricks, I would say the square dances were called by Tom Rice and Tom LaValley, two fine callers. Usually by two or three o'clock in the morning, the folks would begin to tire, and the dance would break up; but sometimes it would continue until five or six. Then everyone went home and, after stoking up the wood fires which usually had well burned out, went gladly to bed.

Martha and I became engaged before I could catch my breath, and the wedding date set for June 28th. I must explain that it was a secret engagement, but Ernie Poirier, Martha's brother was in on it, also her uncle, Toots Mireault.

As I did not own a car, and Ernie did, (a 1917 Maxwell, like the one made famous years later by Jack Benny), the plan was conceived, whereby Ernie would take us to Grande Prairie and we would be secretly married by the United Church Minister.

The day finally arrived and a downpour greeted us. This meant disaster to our plans, because anyone who has travelled the road to Grande Prairie from Bezanson in 1928 knows what a heavy rain would do to it. The car would slip and slide in the black gumbo grease; there being no gravel to amount to anything. We made our way very slowly and the rain let up but this made matters worse, because the wheels picked up the sticky gumbo going through the Red Willow Slough, and it packed the mud guards solid, and the wheels would not turn. Finally, we gave up and decided to return to Poirier's homestead. A good Samaritan, Harry Card, pulled the car out with his team and we returned to his place. After spending a few hours there, we made it back to Poirier's where we stayed waiting for the roads to dry up. On July 3rd, we were able to reach Grande Prairie and were married. Johnny Boyartchuk was one of our witnesses, and Toots Mireault the other.

The big Grande Prairie Fair was in full progress and many from Bezanson were there including nearly all the Robideau Clan, Fords, Ames, etc. and we were suitably congratulated and sent off on the train to Edmonton.

After a short stay there to see Martha's mother, who was staying at the hospital with Leah, who was very ill, we proceeded to Nova Scotia where Martha had the ordeal of meeting the Skinners, who wondered what she would be like. She passed inspection with flying colours, and after a wonderful honeymoon, we returned to the teacherage at Lindsay School to start a new teaching year.

In the fall, the children came to school, from up to three miles away, by every means possible. It took a lot of work and planning to get all the classes organized, but in those days, in the country school, a lot of the older ones helped the younger ones. I'm sure they learned more than the modern children, who get it all spoon-fed to them. Maybe I'm prejudiced.

Discipline problems? Never! Even with up to 72 children, and all grades in one large room, and two cloak rooms, problems were few.

We lived in the two roomed teacherage which kept out the rain in summer, but not the frost in winter. It was heated by an air-tight heater, in the bed-living room, and a wood stove in the kitchen. I was fortunate to have a fairly good radio for the long winter evenings. I can recall the many visits of my good friends; the LaValleys, as well as Mrs. Moody and her lovely daughter, and Wes Brewer and Bill Baker, who would drop in to hear one of their favourite programs, such as Jack Benny, or Fibber McGee and Molly, or George and Gracie Burns.

I must mention a few words regarding the hunting, the like of which I had never seen before or since. Just to get out in the clear crisp air and walk around was exhilerating, and, if one enjoyed hunting, it was an added pleasure. I enjoyed hunting prairie chicken and partridge with my trusty .22, and got to be quite a good marksman. The odd duck I knocked over too, but I had no retriever, so I stuck to prairie chicken mostly.

The long winter flew by quickly. There always seemed to be a dance to look forward to, at Lindsay School or Bezanson Hall. Dances were always on a Friday night. Getting to the dance was not easy in some cases. By this time, Martha and I had an old car, and I recall that, on one occasion, we were all ready to start for the dance at Bezanson when something happened to the head lights and they went out. Being a better teacher than a mechanic, I used two coal-oil lanterns and, together with the Poiriers, we made it to the dance safely, but very slowly. The whole community was there.

Who can forget the sight of Charlie Stewart on the drums, sitting there with his head cocked to one side slightly, cigarette in one corner of his mouth, and never removing it to get rid of the ashes, just blowing the ash away once in a while by a mighty expulsion of breath. Charlie provided the rhythm for Mr. and Mrs. Alderman, and a fine banjo player was there at times also.

House parties, too, were a great part of the social activities, and what fun we had there! Of course, we were fortunate to have Tom Rice and family in a nearby community and what a wonderful leader he was! He knew more parlour games, with their funny, funny forfeits, than you could shake a stick at. And a house party then, 1928 or 1929, was quite different from one today. Not a drop of booze was present, and what laughter and fun was to be had!

By fall, my wife, Martha, was pregnant and the baby was due around mid-November, so I packed her into the old car on Nov. 14th, and took her to Grande Prairie where she visited the Moose Nellis family, until the next day when our eldest son, Alfred, was born. I was teaching that day, and I'm sure it was Johnny Boyartchuk who brought me the good news.

By this time the Great Depression was taking hold, but Martha was able to win a brand new Chevrolet in 1930, by selling subscriptions to the Grande Prairie Herald. She won the contest run by the paper.

The depression was now in full swing and I decided to quit school teaching and get into some other line of business. We moved to Grande Prairie and our middle son, Don, was born there. Shortly after this, I picked up some bad water or milk, in travelling through the country, and came down with typhoid fever. After a long terrible illness, I recovered and, with my family, returned to Nova Scotia for my convalescence.

After several years there, we returned to Camrose, Alberta. Then we moved to Wetaskiwin, where our third son, Gerald, was born.

When World War II broke out, we returned to Fort William, Martha's home town, where I helped build Hurricane fighter planes. After the war, I went back to teaching, from which I retired, after suffering a heart attack, in 1970.

Martha and I still have our three sons, as well as eight grandchildren. We had a trip back to Grande Prairie in 1964, to visit Martha's niece, Dorothy (McDonald) Ringle, but all the time we were there it rained. I had forgotten what Peace River gumbo was like, but it soon brought back many memories! We could not get off the highway to look up any of our old friends, but we did recognize a few places and it just whetted our appetites to return when the roads were dry. Maybe 1977?

ELI (BEN) AND RUTH SMASHNUK AND FAMILY

Eli (Ben) is the fourth oldest son, of ten children, born to Peter and Lena Smashnuk, of Bezanson, Alberta. He was born on July 28, 1922. Eli grew up on the family farm and attended Lindsay school. Later, he worked for O. Albinati and P. Clubine.

He joined the armed services, in Edmonton, in 1940, and went overseas in 1941. He was wounded in action, and spent about a year in hospital in England. He received three distinguished awards.

Eli returned to Canada, in March, 1945, and settled in Beaverlodge, Alberta, where he went into partnership with his brother, Nick, in a blacksmith shop. He met Ruth Werner, from Goodfare, and they were married on July 15th, 1946. Eli went to work, that winter, for Fletcher Smith, in the sawmill south of Beaverlodge.

In the spring of 1947, they bought one quarter section of farm land, in the Lake Saskatoon area. Later,



Mr. and Mrs. Eli (Ben) Smashnuks 25th anniversary — 1971, and family.



Bernard Smashnuk — missing from family photo.

they bought three more quarters, which they farmed (mixed farming). Eli did bush work during winter months, and some custom fence-building in the summer.

In 1976, they sold three quarters of their land, to the Hutterite Colony, and kept one quarter, which had been nearly all bush when they bought it. Together, the family had cleared, salvaged the timber for lumber, broke it, and made it ready for grain and hay growing. They have a new home on this quarter. It is located about three miles west of the old home place.

They have ten children; Linda is married to Franklin Hommy. They have three daughters and live in Beaverlodge. Barbara married Vince Slowinski. They have two sons, and live in Dawson Creek, B.C. Margaret married Grant Woods. Their family consists of three sons and one daughter and lives in Grande Prairie. Bernie married Beverly Woods. They live in Clairmont. Donna married Gordon Parchewsky. They have one daughter and live in St. Albert, Alta. Robert married Lynda Jackson. They have one son and reside in Grande Prairie. David and Randy are both single and live and work in Grande Prairie. Sandra and Debbie are still at home.

LEON SMASHNUK

Leon Smashnuk, son of Peter and Lena Smashnuk, was born at Bezanson, Alberta on July 25, 1928. He attended Lindsay junior and high school. Leon worked in the Peace River area until he moved to Beaverlodge, Alberta in July of 1945. Here he operated a blacksmith and welding shop.

On October 27, 1949, he married Margaret Frey, of Brownvale, Alberta. They had six children, five boys and one girl, all born in Beaverlodge.

Allan Douglas born September 15, 1950.
David Layne born July 9, 1952.
Ronald Leon born January 18, 1954.
Carol Joanne born March 6, 1955.



Mr. and Mrs. Leon Smashnuk and family.

Brian born April 19, 1956.
Gordon William born May 21, 1957.

The family moved to Dawson Creek, B.C. in July of 1960, where Leon established a mobile welding service and continues to operate there. He now has 32 years in the welding field.

Allan married Darlene Hegberg of Dawson Creek, on June 7, 1969 and now resides at Pritchard, B.C. They have two girls, Trina Darlene, born May 24, 1973, and Charlene Gail, born November 27, 1974.

David Layne married Linda Pedersen of Progress, B.C. on Oct. 9, 1971, and now lives at Progress. They have three children. David Jason, born Oct. 6, 1972, Steven Layne, born April 1, 1974 and Amanda Leigh, born January 23, 1976.

Carol married Joe Mann of Dawson Creek, B.C. on October 6, 1973 and now lives in Penticton, B.C. They have one boy, Christopher Jarret, born November 7, 1976.

Ronald married Debbie Osepiuk of Dawson Creek, B.C. on July 17, 1976 and lives in Dawson Creek.

Brian and Gordon reside in Dawson Creek with their parents. Leon and Marg now have six grandchildren.

PETER AND LENA SMASHNUK AND FAMILY

Mr. Peter Smashnuk, with his wife, Lena, and two sons, Nick and Paul, arrived tin Grande Prairie in March of 1920. They ventured from Andrew, Alberta, to file on land that was available in the Grande Prairie area of the Peace River country.

Peter Smashnuk was born in 1889, in the village of Bukowina, Romania. He came to Canada in 1911, working his way by feeding and looking after cattle on a freight boat. He had very little money when he arrived and worked his way across Canada to the West coast, and back to Andrew, Alberta. There, he knew the Bill Frunchak family, who had lived near the Smashnuk family in Romania, and had emigrated in 1897. Mr. Smashnuk worked for Mr. Frunchak for several years.

Lena Frunchak was born in November of 1901, at Andrew. She was the eldest daughter of a family of

ten; four boys and six girls. In 1917, Lena and Pete were married at Andrew, Alberta. A son, Nick, was born to them in 1918, and another son, Paul, was born in 1919.

In 1920, Mrs. Smashnuk and the two boys came by N.A.R. passenger train, that was co-ordinated so that Mr. Smashnuk, who was coming by freight, bringing their three horses, one cow, sleigh, wagon, mower, rake and household supplies, would arrive in Grande Prairie at the same time. Mr. Smashnuk had left Andrew a week earlier but his wife and family arrived ahead of him and spent a lonely week in the Murray Hotel. He was a week late due to the severe blizzards in the Spirit River and Sexsmith areas and finally the train came to a complete stop one mile south of Clairmont. He persuaded the train crew to let him unload his horses and sleigh, and from there, he drove into Grande Prairie. The train, with their belongings, arrived two days later.

After a week in Grande Prairie, they started their journey to Bezanson district where Mr. Smashnuk had filed on a quarter section of land; S.W. 25-72-3 W6th. He also leased another quarter, S.W. 26-71-3 W6th. This quarter had twenty acres of cultivated land, a house and barn. It was known as the 'Johnson Place' and was located four miles south of the present Bezanson store. It was eight miles to their homestead which was one mile east and two miles north of the Bezanson store. It was their intention to live here while they built themselves a house on the new homestead.

Their first acquaintances and new neighbors, were the Norman Moons, the Pete Moons, and they soon met many friends and had many callers, as the Johnson place was the first stopping place this side of the Bezanson townsite ferry. They had a very busy summer, cutting logs for their new home, farming and picking and canning berries that were very plentiful.

William was born at the Johnson place, in 1921.

Many trips were made to the homestead to work on the new house and to clear some land, which was brushed by hand. A wagon box was turned up-side-down and used as a shelter to sleep under, while the house was being built. They moved to the homestead in the spring of 1921. Eleven acres of land was broken and sowed to oats late in the spring. It did make green feed for the horses and cow.

The garden, which did very well, was much relied on for food, along with prairie chicken, partridge and wild ducks for meat. Water was found by damming up a beaver dam. A well was dug six or eight feet deep and cribbed up with logs, allowing the water to seep into it through the soil. This was used for drinking and cooking. Wash water was taken from a slough.

Right on the heels of their move, the Smashnuks had a setback. They had mortgaged their assets to pay for cash rental of the Johnson place. The price of oats had dropped from a dollar thirty-five a bushel, in the spring, to five cents a bushel in the fall. They were unable to pay their rent and lost their horses, cow, sleigh, wagon, and machinery, and were left to start all over again. Mr. Smashnuk then went to work for the Buffalo Lakes Lumber Co. during the winter, and cleared land in the summer.

Mrs. Smashnuk and the boys worked hard and had good neighbors who were always willing to help. Their immediate neighbors were; Menards, Poiriers, LaValleys, Hawryluks, Boyartchuks, Moodys, Callious, Sinclairs, Regniers and Belcourts.

By the fall of 1922, Mr. Smashnuk had saved enough money to buy a cow, a team of horses and a wagon. He also had around thirty acres of land for cultivation. They had harvested their first crop of oats and nearly lost it, and the granary, when a grass fire spread in from the southeast. Mrs. Smashnuk and the boys carried water, with pails and cans, from the beaver dam and, spraying the walls of the granary and house, managed to save everything but the straw pile and fence.

Their nearest store and Post Office was Smoky River Post Office. It was located three and one-half miles north of the present Bezanson store. It was later moved to the Bezanson area and was known as Rooney's Store.

The nearest hospital was Grande Prairie.

The Lindsay school was one-half mile to the west of them.

Grain was hauled to Clairmont, Grande Prairie or Sexsmith. There was also a flour mill in Sexsmith, where they took their own wheat and had it made into flour, cereal and bran. Their main source of transportation was horses and wagon in summer, and sleigh in winter. It took eight to nine hours to make a trip into Grande Prairie, one way.

In 1923, another son, Eli (Ben), was born. Mrs. Smashnuk became ill with phlebitis and was taken to a registered nurse, Mrs. Amireaux, who lived two and one-half miles north of them. She stayed there for treatment until she was back on her feet again. Paul decided to look for his mother but wandered off the trail and got lost. He was found four hours later, a mile away from home, sitting on a log.

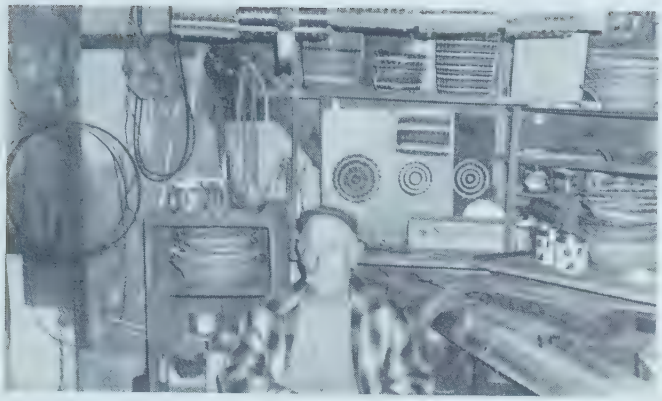
In 1924, Mrs. Smashnuk gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl, George and Dorothy.

They had now cleared 11 more acres of land and had harvested their first crop of wheat. They had also bought a plow, harrows and a binder. Their livestock had increased and they had more cattle, some chickens, some pigs, a large flock of turkeys and a dozen tame geese.

Their crops of oats, wheat and barley were harvested by binder, stooked and then stacked to be threshed later. Fords, DeBolts, and Metzs had threshing machines, which were run by steam engines, and would come and do the threshing for them. In later years, tractors took over and the steam engine vanished.

Mr. Smashnuk could now spend all of his time on the farm. They shipped cream, butter, and eggs, which helped to buy groceries. He had lots of red willows on the farm and started weaving willow baskets, a hobby he had learned in the old country. These were made during the long winter evenings and also sold, which helped the income. In later years, when he retired, he spent most of his time weaving baskets from coloured telephone and electrical wires.

A daughter, Mary, was born in 1925. When she was two and one-half years old, she was sick and was taken to the Grande Prairie Hospital where she was



Mr. Peter Smashnuk and his basket workshop — 1969.

operated on for a ruptured appendix. Dr. L. J. O'Brien performed the operation.

Mrs. Smashnuk was a wonderful seamstress and made most of the childrens' clothes. They now had a Singer sewing machine and she made dresses, shirts, coats, overalls, boys caps and also some hats from muskrat hides. Most of the material for their clothes was bought through Eaton's mail order catalogue.

The Smashnuks suffered another blow in 1926, when a premature son, Harry, was born and died one month later. He was buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery.

Two more sons were born to them; Donald, in 1927, and Leon, in 1928. A daughter, Doreen, was born in 1929.

The Smashnuks spoke Ukrainian when they first settled here. Their neighbors were of many nationalities such as; French, Cree, German, Italian, American and English. Since the English language was used in school, and among the neighbors, they taught the children English and spoke it at home.

They were of the Greek Orthodox religion; the two eldest boys were baptized in the church at Andrew. The rest of the children were baptized in the Anglican church. There were no churches in the immediate area, but the Rev. Canon James occasionally came from Grande Prairie and held services at the Lindsay school. Later on, an Anglican church was built at Goodwin and the minister from this church, held services every second Sunday at the Lindsay School. Rev. J. B. Owens and Rev. Thorpe, were the two ministers in charge of this parish.

Through their many hardships and setbacks, by 1929, they had cleared and cultivated eighty acres of land. Also that year, they bought the Moody quarter; S.E. 26-72-3 W6th, to the west, separated from them by a road. There were twenty acres of land cleared on it. A slough and some land, was fenced for a much needed pasture for the horses and cattle. Though they gained more land and harvested more grain, they still found it rough, as the price of grain had dropped as low as ten cents a bushel for wheat. It didn't pay to ship the grain, so most of it was fed to the cattle and pigs. Through all the hard work and slow progress, Mr. Smashnuk was able to purchase his first vehicle in 1934; a 1928 Chev. truck. This was a big improvement in transportation and was still used in 1962, when Mr. Smashnuk sold their farm to Lee Snider.



The family of Nick and Nellie Smashnuk — 1960. Left to right: Michael, Nellie, Lyla, Janet, Bruce, Charlie and Lawrey.



Mr. and Mrs. Nick Smashnuk.

When the family had all left home, Mr. and Mrs. Smashnuk sold the farm and moved to Ft. St. John, B.C. They bought a lot there and built a new home. He worked on road construction for a while, but, in later years, was employed as a night clerk at the Condell Hotel. Mrs. Smashnuk cooked in a bush camp for a while, then, in later years, did laundry and janitor work and also some baby sitting, until 1974.

In 1974, their health started to fail them and, after Mr. Smashnuk had several operations, they moved into the Nursing home in Grande Prairie, where he passed away in January of 1975, at the age of 85. He was buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery. Mrs. Smashnuk still resides in Central Park Lodge in Grande Prairie.

Nick, their oldest son, married Nellie Hawryluk in 1940. They lived on the Ramsay farm, one mile south and one-half mile west of the Bezanson store. In 1943, they moved to Beaverlodge where he was employed at



Mr. and Mrs. Peter Smashnuk on their golden anniversary — 1967.

the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm. In 1945, he purchased the blacksmith shop from Jim Casleman and operated his own business until 1949, when he sold out to his brother Leon, and moved to Grande Prairie. He took up employment as a plumber for J. J. Lamb Plumbing. In 1954, he went to work for the Saskatoon Mountain Airbase as Plumber and Steamfitter, until 1956, when he started his own plumbing and heating business in Grande Prairie.

Nick and Nellie have six children; Janet, who got her nurses training in the Royal Alex Hospital, in Edmonton, is married to David Lougheed of Grande Prairie. They have two children; Stanley and Terri. Charlie followed the plumbing trade and is employed as a pipefitter in Sudbury, Ontario. He married Carolyn Finucane, and they have two children; Lori Lynn and Shawn. Lyla chose teaching as her profession. She married Donald McLaren of Lethbridge. They have three children: Tracey, David and Leanne. They now reside in Calgary. Bruce found his interests in the refrigeration trade and is employed by Trans Canada Freezers, in Edmonton. Lawrey married Jane Reeves. He is working in construction in Kingston, Ontario. Michael is still single and lives at home.

Four of Mr. and Mrs. Smashnuk's sons saw action in the second World War; Paul joined the Canadian Army in the fall of 1939, and was killed in action in Italy, in 1942. William also joined the army in 1939. He was injured in a motorcycle accident in England and, later, was wounded while in action in Italy. On his return to Canada, he resided in Calgary where he died in 1947. Eli (better known as Ben) was in the Canadian Army.

George served overseas in the Canadian army. He was wounded in France. He returned to Canada in 1944, and worked for awhile in the Beaverlodge area. Later, he moved to Mayo, Yukon, to try his luck at mining. He was caught in a snowslide, and seriously injured, in 1962. Later, he sold his claims and moved to Sydney, B.C. He married Alice White.

Dorothy married Alfred Hotte, in 1942. He was killed in action in France. She moved to Ft. St. John, where she married Cecil Pickell. They have three daughters and four grandchildren.

Mary married Earl Norton. They reside in Grande Prairie, and have one daughter and three grandchildren.

Donald died at home, in 1944, and was buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery.

Leon is married to Margaret Frey and lives in Dawson Creek, B.C. They have six children and six grandchildren.

Doreen married Norman Semotonk and resides in Calgary, where she is employed as a bookkeeper and payroll clerk.

The Smashnuk family enjoyed their stay in the Bezanson district, wher they had many good friends and neighbors. Their pioneering days were a great undertaking and an experience that was never forgotten. They had ten children, twenty-six grandchildren and thirty-two great-grandchildren.

LELAND AND MARJORIE SNIDER

Life for us, in the Peace River country, began in the fall of 1961. On a trip to visit a cousin in Grande Prairie in July of that year, we had been pleased with what we saw. Crops looked good. Having been brought up on the farm in Saskatchewan back in the thirties, we had always thought it would be nice to have our own farm. Maybe this country was the answer, for land prices here were just beginning to climb. Whereas in central Alberta, where we were living at that time, land was selling high.

So it was, that in Sept. of 1961, with our family of four young children, we moved to LaGlace, where Leland worked on the new school gymnasium and Marjorie taught school. The people of this community were good to us. We will not soon forget the kettle of stew and the apple pie sent over to us by our nearby neighbour, Jean Haukedal, while we were still unpacking. While there we enjoyed fellowship in the Mennonite Brethren Church. We look back with kind remembrances of our ten months spent there.

However, we still had in mind getting our own land. In the spring of 1962, while checking around, we learned that the Smashnuk farm, at Bezanson, was for sale. So, after purchasing this property, we moved in July, to Bezanson, to begin our new venture of farming in the South Peace.

And so the years have passed, during which time Marjorie has also spent several years teaching in the Bezanson school. Our family has grown up. Keith, our oldest son, is married and living in Swift Current. Shirley is married and living in Steinbach, Manitoba. Curt and Jeannette, the two youngest, are still in high school.

We have enjoyed our time spent here, and our children think there is no place quite like the Peace River country.

EMMNETH (JACK) STAFFORD

Jack Stafford was an American bachelor, who homesteaded S.W. 18-72-2 W6th, in 1917. Later he sold this quarter to Jim and Bea Fells. He had bought the former Herbert Benedick quarter, N.W. 36-71-3 W6th, and farmed there during the 1920's. Jack was a stockman, who was fond of his animals. He hauled logs and helped to build the first Bezanson Hall. Jack Stafford was a good neighbor and he liked going to dances and visiting friends in this district.

MRS. HUGH THOMPSON

Mr. and Mrs. Carry and Edith (Eisemen) Crill, came over the Edson Trail, to the Grande Prairie area. This young couple filed on S.E. 18-71-7 W6th, in the Dimsdale district. Their daughter, Evelyn (Mrs. Bruce Robertson, of Hythe), was born there.

Tragedy struck this family, in 1915, when Carry became lost on an overland trip in from Edmonton. Widowed, Mrs. Crill and baby then moved to the Lindsay district to be near her sister, Mrs. Rowe Thompson. She filed on S.E. 18-72-2 W6th, on the Smoky bank, east of the Jim Fells quarter, in 1916. She married Mr. Hugh Thompson, in 1918. Her father-in-law, Frank Thompson, built a home on this quarter and farmed here for some years.

As Mrs. Edith Thompson, she filed on N.E. 18-72-2 W6th. Hugh and Edith had a son, Lawrence, who was born in 1919, in Dimsdale. Lawrence lives, and farms, the original Crill homestead, at Dimsdale.

In 1927, the family moved to the Beaverlodge district to farm. It was here, that same year, that their son Frank, was born.

HARRY AND NONA TSCHRITTER AND FAMILY

On July 26, 1914, Harry was born on his father's farm at Castor, Alberta. Four years later, the family moved to farm at Beiseker, Alberta, where at age seven, Harry attended the Level Land school. Later years, his parents farmed at Cluny, Rockyford, Beiseker and in 1931, moved to Gayford, Alberta.

As a small boy in Cluny, Harry had a dreadful experience one evening. Mounted on his pony, he was driving the cows home, when one ornery critter broke away from the herd. The young rider raced along the river bank to catch the stray, when suddenly his pony plunged over the edge of a big, old, abandoned well. Harry was thrown free and landed on the far side of the hole. Terrified, he ran home for help, but when he and his mother returned, they found the pony had disappeared below the water. The boy's grief over the lost pony, obscured the realization that he, too, had come close to death in the mishap.

Around 1931, Harry worked for John Leiski, for wages of $1 per day. The following year, he worked for Mr. A. A. Roth.

Mrs. Tschritter, the former Nona Warnes, was born at Forgan, Sask. Her father, George Warnes, was born in 1878, at Liverpool, England. He emigrated to Canada with his parents, in 1885, and grew up in Ontario. George married Edna Doube and they later came west to farm at Forgan. Their daughter, Nona, was born there.

In 1900, the legendary Sam McGee, who was a young construction engineer in the Yukon at the time



Mr. and Mrs. Harry Tschritter and family.

of the Gold Rush, returned home to Ontario, to attend his mother's funeral. While there, he met and married Ruth Warnes, thus becoming Mrs. Tschritters uncle by marriage.

The McGees and brother-in-law, George Warnes, went back to work in the North. Mr. Warnes became head cook for the Sam McGee's camp of sixteen men.

While working in Whitehorse, Sam met the Canadian poet, Robert Service, who was working in the bank, where Sam did his financial business. They became friends, and Robert Service asked if he could use McGee's name in a poem that he was composing. Sam, never dreaming he was to become immortal in the poet's 'Cremation of Sam McGee', agreed.

"The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,
But the queerest they ever did see
Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge
I cremated Sam McGee."

The real Sam McGee, after a life-time of hard work in the North and later on the farm in Central Alberta, died at 72 years of age, in 1940, and is buried east of Beiseker, Alberta.

Mrs. Tschritter's mother, passed away in 1943, and was followed by her husband, George, in 1949.

Mr. Tschritter recalled how he had met his bride-to-be. "This sweet little girl was chumming with my sister. One Sunday, while I was standing on the Church steps, she gave me a playful shove, which landed me in a large mud puddle. I regained my feet and found that my good suit was a muddy mess. As I angrily strode away, the amused laughter of all the young people there, followed me."

"A few months later, Nona finished her employment with Mrs. E. Gramms (McGee), and returned to her home at Forgan, Sask. This was not the last I was to hear from her. She wrote often, and soon I was receiving three or four letters a week. She returned to Beiseker on Dec. 17, 1936, and we were married."

Mr. and Mrs. Tschritter farmed in the Beiseker district for the next three years, then moved to Gayford, Alberta. Their 1937 crops were badly damaged by hail, and the following year an early frost ruined their grain fields and garden. Their faith in farming was somewhat restored for in the next three years, they were able to raise good yields of grain. In 1964, they

sold their land and came to farm in the Grande Prairie area.

The Tschritter family bought Oscar Albinati's farm, and worked very hard for the next six years. During this time, they met many Bezanson neighbors and took part in church functions and school programs. In 1971, they lost the farm over financial conditions. The next three years were spent on a rented farm in the Woking district. They now farm the former Marvin Jensen land; rented from Marathon Reality.

Mr. and Mrs. Tschritter raised nine children; Marjorie, Audrey, Yvonne, LeRoy, Kenneth, Sharon, Eileen, Rosaling and James. A tragic farm tractor accident took the life of their 15 year old son, LeRoy, in 1958. The daughters are all married and are living in the Calgary area.

James helps his parents on the farm.

ALEX AND TRESSA TURNER AND FAMILY

Alex Turner, son of Walter and Helen (Corey) Turner, was born in Brighton, Sussex, England. As a young man, he emigrated to Saskatoon, Sask. and arrived on March 25, 1921. For the following two years, he worked at the University and Exhibition grounds as caretaker and maintenance man. Alex heard of homestead land in the Kindersley district, so he filed on a quarter section. To his disappointment, he discovered over half of his land was large boulders covered by a half-foot of soil. Only about seventy acres, at the foot of a long slope, was good agricultural land. He found employment in this area, while proving up his land.

In the fall of 1926, Alex went west to Vancouver. He worked at the coast for some time, before returning to his farm in Saskatchewan. During his travels, he heard of the Peace River country in Northern Alberta. After selling his farm, he saddled his pony and rode the long journey. He arrived in Grande Prairie in the fall of 1929. A blacksmith by trade, Alex soon found work in this town. The following year, he left for Fort St. John and took out a second homestead. He set up a shop of his own, which he operated until 1947.

The Bristol family came from Yorkshire, England, and settled in Grey County, Ontario to farm, in 1886. Their daughter, Hannah, was raised and educated there. She married David Brown and the couple farmed and raised a family of seven. Their daughter, Alice Matilda, married Noah Jeffery in 1906, and had a family of six. A daughter, Tressa was born in 1912. Noah, and family, farmed in Saskatchewan for a few years and in 1919, they moved to a homestead in the Mountain Trail district, west of Lake Saskatoon, Alberta. Tressa recalls their first school was taught in a bachelor's cabin. Later, the Mountain Trail school was built. The family received their junior high education at the Lake Saskatoon school.

Mr. Jeffery farmed and worked for the railroad, and had various other jobs to help support his family. While working in the Dawson Creek area, Noah took a liking to the country north of Fort St. John. He sold his farm and filed on a homestead at Montney, which is north and east of Charlie Lake, B.C. In 1930, he moved his family to their home.

Tressa married Leland Stringer, who was employed with construction on the Alaska Highway. During the following years, four children were born; June, Allen, Delores and Betty.

Oil companies were moving into the North. Leland went to work on one of the surveying outfits. While working for an oil rig in the Ft. Nelson area, Mr. Stringer lost his life, as he attempted to cross the Muskwa river on a Cat. Tressa was left with the responsibilities of raising their four small children.

On June 21, 1944, she married Alex Turner. Their three children; Monty (Teddy), Mae and Raymond were born, while the family resided in Fort St. John. Alex raised, and trained race horses on his homestead. In 1947, he sold his business and brought his thoroughbred stallion, and twenty mares and colts, to Grande Prairie. He leased pasture land east of the town and built a house and blacksmith shop. The following year, he brought his family to Grande Prairie. The next twelve years were busy; the seven children attended school in Grande Prairie, Mrs. Turner worked at the Grande Prairie hospital and Alex had his shop and horses to keep him busy.

The town grew to city status and, when Alex's leased land was annexed by the city, he moved the family, house, shop and horses to Bezanson.

The children attended the Bezanson Consolidated school. Mrs. Turner commuted to work at the hospital, from Bezanson. The Turners took an active part in community events. Alex served as secretary of the Hall board and did the janitor work. He did maintenance work at the school and spent many hours in his blacksmith shop. Mrs. Turner was a willing helper in the Ladies Aid of the new Bezanson United Church.

They are now retired on a farm, north of Debolt, in the Puskwaskau district.

GORDON AND BETTY WATHEN

Gordon and Betty Wathen were born at High River, Alberta. After their marriage in 1959, they farmed Gordon's parents place near Okotoks, Alberta. It was here that Chester and Danny were born.

In 1962, Gordon bought a farm which was located 2½ miles southwest of Rycroft, Alberta. In May, Betty and their two little sons joined Gordon on the new farm. Three years later, the farm was sold and the family moved to Grande Prairie, where Gordon became employed with the Northern Alberta Dairy Pool. During this year, twin boys, Karl and Keith joined the Wathen family. In 1967, their only daughter, Nina, was born.

The urge to farm got the best of Gordon. He found a farm, with a large lake on it, north-west of Bezanson. One day, Gordon loaded a boat into his pick-up and invited Betty to go and see the place with him. They arrived on the west side of the farm, carried the boat through bush to the waters edge, launched it and rowed, almost the half mile, right up to the farmyard. Betty recalled the large numbers of birds, water-fowl and muskrats she saw. The trees and brush, that surrounded this large slough, were as dense as a jungle.

In August, 1966, Gordon bought this farm; N.W. 28-72-3 W6th, from Mrs. Haviland Bulford. One cold day, March 28, 1967, the family left Grande Prairie, and

moved into the little old farmhouse on their new farm. The snow was still very deep, at this time, and the thermometer registered 25 degrees below, Fahrenheit.

There was no water or electricity in this home and for the young mother of five, who had three babies under 18 months of age, the task of washing, became a real tough chore.

The following year, in 1968, the big slough (Calliou Lake) was drained. During the following years, the brush was removed and the land broken for cultivation.

A new house, which is fully modern, was built in 1973.

Betty found the soil ideal for her greenhouse project. She grows lovely bedding plants for sale to the community and supplies the Grande Prairie Co-op store with many varieties of flowers and vegetable seedlings. She calls her project "The Bezanson Greenhouses".

RUPERT AND HAZEL WEEGAR

Rupert Weegar was born on December 19, 1900 in Chesterville, Ontario. His father, Lindsay Joel Weegar had freighted for I. G. Baker into Alberta in the 1890's and took a liking to the foothill country.

In 1902, Lindsay, his wife Neta May (Dillabough), four children, Pearl, Earl, Percy and Rupert and a box car of household effects and machinery arrive in Calgary on March 1st.

Mr. Weegar settled his family in a comfortable rented home in Calgary for the next months, while he filed on the S.W. ¼ of 26-29 W4, two miles east of Balzac and north of Calgary. He built a house, barn, chicken house and corrals, broke ten acres of prairie sod with horses and a walking plough. He returned east, purchased a carload of two year milk strain heifers to pasture them on the lush grass on St. George's Island near Calgary. Young Bob Erskine camped and tended the herd for the summer.

That October, Maurice was born on the new homestead. Mr. Lindsay Weegar was instrumental in getting the first school built in the Buttes. The older Weegar children, with classmates from miles around, attended this new school built in 1903.



Weegar family at the homestead in 1942.

Mr. Weegar died in 1908, still a young man. His widow and family continued on the farm. They sold eggs, milk, cream and butter to customers in Calgary, raised cattle and grain for a living.

In 1915, the beloved mother Neta passed away, leaving sister Pearl to keep house and raise the two younger brothers.

Later Pearl married and raised a family of seven children in British Columbia. She died in 1955.

Earl Weegar joined the 191 Battalion in 1916, went overseas in 1917 and was killed that fall while serving with the 31 Battalion in France.

The three brothers remained on the farm until 1926. The homestead was then sold. Percy Weegar went to work for the C.P.R. in Calgary, married and raised a family of six. His wife Lina passed away in 1949 and Percy in 1953.

Maurice Weegar bought a farm out by Preddis, owned a store where he and wife Belle raised two sons and a daughter. They are now retired and residing in Calgary.

Rupert Weegar came North to the Peace River country. He recalls the prairie fires, blizzards, and a coyote pack of thirty within a hundred yards of his childhood home. The Balzac area was real buffalo range before the turn of the century. Buffalo trails leading to water holes were cut six to eight inches deep in the prairie sod. The Indians gathered the bleached bones of these mighty herds, loading them into box cars at Balzac to be shipped East. For their labour they received seven dollars a ton.

Rupert remembers being told of an episode that took place one summer evening. Mrs. Weegar, with tea towel in each hand was removing a sizzling pan of supper biscuits from the oven. Through the open kitchen door rushed an Indian woman, snatched baby Rupert up off the floor and fled. Mrs. Weegar overtook her, shoved the pan of biscuits toward her. The frightened woman dropped the baby, grabbed the hot pan in her bare hands and sprinted fifty feet to a waiting wagon. In seconds the lurching wagon disappeared behind a hill.

On coming to the Grande Prairie district, Rupert found work in the Moon settlement. He soon started farming on his own. In March, 1929, I, Hazel Patterson, married Rupert and we farmed in Bezanson. Later we homesteaded north of Debolt for the next 9 years. Our children, Earl, Harvey, Lorice and Delmer rode horse back for three miles to attend school at Darwin. We have many happy memories of the fine people of this area.

My story begins with grandfather, Mr. B. D. Patterson leaving Osceola, Iowa in 1915 to file on land by proxy for his four sons, Art, Guy, Victor and my father Rex. Grandfather came over the Trail to Peace River, then by boat (The Beaver) to the Bezanson townsite, where brother Oll Patterson met him with a wagon drawn by a team of oxen. He filed on 5 quarters then returned to Iowa to prepare to bring his large family to Canada in the following spring.

Rex Patterson shipped machinery, household goods, horses and livestock from Osceola to High Prairie in early March. Here sleighs had to be reassembled, horses shod, cargo loaded for a hundred mile trek over the Trail to the Bezanson Homestead on March 16, 1917. Cousin Ott Patterson had built a frame cabin which was completed when father arrived with doors, windows and shingles. This was to be our home for many years.

Mother, Grace Patterson, baby Wauneita and I arrived April 16, 1916 on one of the first trains into Grande Prairie. We were accompanied by my uncles and their families. Our new small house was home to seventeen until Dad's brothers completed their own homes that summer.

The men worked hard at brushing and breaking that early spring. They sowed ten acres of oats and a huge garden, only to lose everything to a black frost on August 9th that summer. Vegetables for the table and feed for the livestock were in short supply that first winter.

Our post office, Glen Leslie, had Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Leslie as postmasters. I attended school held in the Glen Leslie Church. In those days there were no fences. I rode and explored every mile of the surrounding country in search of Dad's cattle and milk cows. Met many of our new neighbors while in pursuit of those contrary cattle.

Three boys, Vernon born August 22, 1917, Milfred October 1921 and Kenneth, March 2, 1925, were born on the farm. Our life was not all work, for picnics were organized and card games. Quilting bees were also fun. Visiting and house parties was the order of the day. In 1923, across the trail from the R. Patterson home, the community built a large log hall. Here dances, picnics, plays, etc. drew large crowds from miles around for many years.

Dad and Mother were always active in community events. As their family grew up they too followed in their parent's footsteps. Mother passed away December 17, 1969. Dad died on March 12, 1974 and are both sadly missed in the district.

During the spring of 1944 we bought Peter Ramsey's half section and returned to Bezanson to farm. The children went to school at Lindsay and helped us on the farm.

Our children live within four miles of us here in Bezanson.

Earl and Allie live on the Rex Patterson homestead and have one child, Annette Marie.

Harvey married Pat (Parrie) Nelson, works for the Auction Mart and farms. They have one son Trevor at home.

Delmer married Betty Lindgrin of Haney, B.C. and have a small son Gerry.

Lorice married Desmond Stark October 24, 1951. They have six children;

Loraine married Wally Kruger of Grande Prairie, both work and live in Edmonton.

Garry Stark is a draughtman, works and resides in Calgary.

Ethel married Marvin Rigler of Crystal Creek, live and both work in Grande Prairie.

Murry graduated in May, works in Grande Prairie and helps on the farm.

Randy and Dale are attending school in Sexsmith and are still at home.

We are now retired and look forward to the children visiting us.



Standing: Delmer, Harvey and Earl. Seated: Lorice, Rupert and Hazel Weegar.

THE LINDSAY SCHOOL

One of the landmarks in the early history of the Bezanson area, serving the educational needs of its community, was the Lindsay school, which opened its doors, to some 30 pupils, on September 1, 1921.

Realizing the need for such a building, several interested settlers met, at the home of Elmer and Grace Moody, in the summer of 1920. Among those present were: Nick Kochalyk, Tom Burt, Frank Carter, Will Ford, Moose Nellis and Mike Hawryluk. Following confirmation from the Department of Education, in Edmonton, that there were sufficient pupils in the district to warrant such a need, Bill Welsh, of Grande Prairie, immediately began construction, of a school, on land located on N.W. 23-72-3 W6th, owned by Fred Ames. A three-man school committee, made up of: L. J. Nellis, chairman, Harry Severson, sec.-treas. and



Lindsay School.



Lindsay school basketball team of the 1930's. Evelyn Ford, Allie LaValley, Mary Hawryluk, standing. Dorothy McDonald, and Ilene Rooney in front.



Lindsay School — 1922-23 — Harvey Newton — first teacher.

Ed Nichol, trustee, along with Mr. C. Bremner as school inspector, hired Miss E. Carter, as the first teacher in the area.

Named after one of the native pioneers in the area, Mr. George Lindsay, the Lindsay school served as the community centre for the local church services, farmers' meetings and dances, besides providing educational facilities to all students from Grades I through to IX. However, a heavy enrollment forced another room to be opened, in the fall of 1933. These two rooms, consisting of the Lindsay Junior school and a log building rented from Mr. Peter Smashnuk, remained in operation until June of 1938, when a decision to keep only the Lindsay Junior room open, was reached.

Provision for secondary education, in the area, was realized with the opening of a new Lindsay High School, built on the S.E. 16-72-3 W6th. It opened in September of 1938. The Lindsay Senior School was moved to the Bezanson hamlet, where Grades 1 to 9 were taught.

The idea of centralization saw five school districts: Somme, Bezanson, Lindsay, East Kleskun and Fitzimmons, amalgamate in 1950. The two-room school, under the title Lindsay School District No. 3898, consisted of the Lindsay Senior room and the Lindsay Junior room, which was moved, into the hamlet, in 1950.

LINDSAY JUNIOR NO. 3898
Year: 1921
Enrollment — 30 pupils. Teacher: Miss E. Carter (August, September, October).

In February, 1922, school re-opened with an enrollment of 38 pupils, with Mr. Harvey Newton as teacher. September 1, 1922-1923: Teacher: H. Newton.

September 1, 1923-1924. Teacher: Hazel M. Lupton. Inspector: L. B. Yule. Enrollment: 35 pupils. School Board: Moose Nellis, Chairman. Roy Ames, Trustee. H. B. Severson, Sec. Treas.

September 1, 1924-25: Teacher: J. H. Dixon. Enrollment: 45, School Board: George Ames, Trustee. Nick Kochalyk, Sec. Treas. Roy Ames, Chairman.

September 1, 1925-26. Teacher: D. G. Scott. Enrollment: 47. School Board: Tom Burt, Chairman. Nick Kochalyk, Trustee. Roy Ames, Sec. Treas.

September 1, 1926-27. After permission was granted, from the Department of Education, to close the school for the months of September and October, the money saved helped to finance the building of a teacherage, which was constructed by Charles Brewer. School resumed on November 1st, with an enrollment of 46 students. Teacher: Fred Bryenton.

September 1927-28. Teacher: Murray Skinner. School Board: Mike Mawryluk, Trustee. Zotique Menard, Chairman. Tom Burt, Sec.-Treas.

September 1, 1928-29. Teacher: Murray Skinner. Enrollment: 49. School Board: M. Hawryluk, trustee. Zotique Menard, chairman. Nels McLaughlin, Sec.-Treas.

September 1, 1929-30. Teacher: Murray Skinner. Enrollment: 53. Inspector: H. E. Balfour. School Board: Nick Kochalyk, chairman, T. J. LaValley, Sec.-Treas. M. Hawryluk, trustee.

September 1, 1930-31. Teacher: Murray Skinner. Enrollment: 60.

September 1, 1931-32. Teacher: Mary Clifford. Enrollment: 62. Inspector: N. W. Oke. School Board: Will Ford, trustee. W. R. Ames, sec.-treas. Nels McLaughlin, chairman.

September 1, 1932-33. Teacher; Mary Clifford. Enrollment: 65.

During Miss Clifford's time of teaching such a large classroom, she deemed it feasible to group two grades. This proved so successful that Inspector Oke recommended such an undertaking be tried in other crowded school districts. Later, this grouping system was adopted by the Department of Education.

September 1, 1933-34. Because of such a heavy enrollment, the Department of Education authorized the opening of another room. A log building was rented from Peter Smashnuk at the rate of $10 a year. Miss Clifford agreed to take a drop in salary, from $1100 to $750 per year, in order that a second teacher, Miss R. Dobson, could be hired at $600 per year.

Lindsay Senior Room — grades 3-10. Teacher Miss Mary Clifford. Inspector: H. E. Balfour. School Board: Nels McLaughlin, chairman. W. R. Ames, sec.-treas. W. E. Ford, trustee.

Lindsay Primary Room — Grades 1-2. Teacher: Miss Rose Dobson. For a short period, due to the illness of Miss Dobson, Miss Marion Baron kept this room in operation.

September 1, 1934-35. Teacher: Mis Lewis. Inspector: Mr. Walker.

September 1, 1935-36. Lindsay Senior. Teacher: Miss Lewis.

September 1, 1936-37. Lindsay Senior, Teacher: Miss Eileen Skirten. School Board: W. F. Ford, chairman. W. R. Ames, sec.-treas. Frank Dumas, Trustee.

September 1, 1937-38. Lindsay Senior. Teacher: Miss E. Skirten.

In the fall of 1938, a new Lindsay High School was opened, on Highway 2, resulting in the closure of the Lindsay primary room.

September 1, 1938-39. Teacher: Mrs. M. Kelsey. Enrollment: 45 pupils.

September 1, 1939-40. Teacher: Newton Grimmett. Enrollment: 41.

September 1, 1940-41. Teacher: Newton Grimmett. Enrollment: 32.

September 1, 1941-42. Teacher: Newton Grimmett. Enrollment: 33.

September 1, 1942-43. Teacher: Isabel Moody. Enrollment: 29.

September 1, 1943-44. Teacher: Isabel Moody. Enrollment: 26.

September 1, 1944-45. Teacher: Mrs. Jean Westendorf. Enrollment: 34.

September 1, 1945-46. Enrollment: 25. Teacher: Mrs. Jean Westendorf.

September 1, 1946-47. Inspector: Mr. Stan Hambly. Teacher: Marie Bayens. Enrollment: 19.

September 1, 1947-48. Teacher: Marie Bayens.

Lindsay High School — 1938-39. Teacher: H. B. Carrico. Inspector: Mr. Walker.

1939-40. Teacher: H. B. Carrico.

1940-41. Teacher: Isabel McKenzie.

1941-42. Teacher: S. W. Brooks.

1942-43. Teacher: Albert Thompson.

1943-44. Teacher: E. J. Meen.

1944-45. Teacher: E. J. Meen.

1945-46. Teacher: E. J. Meen.

1946-47. Teacher: C. S. Carson.

1948-49. The task of moving the Lindsay High School to the Bezanson hamlet, was undertaken by Mr. Hanker. Many remarked, later, what a marvelous job he had done, as the students' water glasses were still intact when the school reached its destination. Lindsay Junior was closed and the one-room Lindsay school was opened in Bezanson, with Mrs. Noreen Ford teaching Grades I-IX, with an enrollment of 31 pupils.

1949-50. Teacher: Mrs. Noreen Ford, Enrollment: 33.

The Lindsay Junior room was moved to Bezanson, also, and a two-room school was opened; Lindsay Senior and Lindsay Junior.

1950-51. Grades 5-9. Enrollment; 24. Senior Room: Mrs. Noreen Ford.

1951-52. Lindsay Senior Enrollment: 22. Teacher: John Morrison.

Lindsay Junior: Mrs. Marie Ames. Enrollment: 29.

1952-53. Lindsay Senior. Enrollment: 22. Teacher: W. E. Griffin.

Lindsay Junior Teacher: Marie Ames.

1953-54. Lindsay Senior. Teacher: Wm. E. Griffin. Enrollment: 28.

Lindsay Junior. Enrollment: 25.

1954-55. Lindsay Senior. Teacher: Mr. Roy Gouchey. Enrollment: 30. Inspector: R. E. Rees.

Lindsay Junior. Teacher: Mrs. Fern Gouchey. Enrollment: 33. Due to illness of Mrs. Gouchey, Miss Wilma Halstead taught from May 1st to June 30th.

GRACE ROSAMOND (DOBSON) WILSON

What a wonderful way to start a teaching career! I rode on the "Galloping goose" from Edmonton to Grande Prairie, was met by a man with his team of horses knee-deep in mud, had typhoid, and ran into all sorts of disasters; yet feel that the year I spent at Lindsay School (1933-1934) was one of the best years of my life.

By the Fall of 1933 I had tramped across many farmer's fields near Edmonton, looking for a job, for I was fresh out of Normal School. But opportunities were very scarce, and I was quite disheartened, for I had stood right near the top of my classes. (Students were often going back to their own districts.) However, in September I received a telegram from Captain H. Balfour, offering me a job at Lindsay, to share teacherage and school with Mary Clifford.

What a trip! Mary made contact with me by wearing a flower on her coat — as in great adventures and romances. The "galloping goose", as we called the N.A.R., puffed out of Edmonton jammed full. Few people got any rest during the next 20 hours. Mr. Rooney, or was it Mr. R. Ames, a member of the School Board, met us, and the horses plodded 25 miles or so to our new abode in a tiny teacherage — a real honest-to-goodness doll's house — 2 rooms with barely room for 2 cots, a heater, a stove, a table and 2 chairs, and applebox cupboards. We hung clothes on nails along the walls. — Oh yes, and kept an unloaded shotgun behind the door to scare off anyone we didn't want to come calling. There were "moon-shiners" not too far away, and we sometimes looked up from our work to see faces peering in the window at us.

I taught in the "new" school; a former log house remodelled into one room. I had grades 1, 2, 4, and 10, consisting of a real variety of young people, from ages

six to about sixteen. — Fords, Ames, Robideaus, Smashnuks, Albinatis, Bulfords, Nortons, Nellises, LaValleys, Menards, and Whalens, (I hope I haven't forgotten anyone). Grade 10 consisted of Eileen Hunter and Olga Kochalyk. What a time I had making hectograph copies of seatwork for the lower grades, and working out geometry and algebra problems for the seniors.

But we had a marvelous year! We won the award for Physical Education, played a sort of rugby-basketball outdoors, drilled and drilled in phonics and rapid calculations. (Everyone did that.) We had contests going all the time. Well I remember the day I came into the school after recess to find grasshoppers in my desk drawers, grasshoppers under the handbell, grasshoppers everywhere. So, of course we immediately studied these insects. There were more than enough to go around. We noticed how they spit tobacco, how they jumped, how they produced such a funny sound with their legs. The grand finale was to see whose grasshopper could jump the farthest. The winner belonged to Ernie Robideau; it jumped down the back of Veryl Ames' dress. What a riot! A garter snake was brought in for inspection, but created no furor with the teacher, for I like them. We had an easy lesson that time. One afternoon, a boy lugged in a benumbed groundhog, which he had knocked over the head. The lesson went well till the poor creature blinked an eye as he began to revive, and as I held him by the tail. There was a sudden ending to our observations.

The winter weather was something to contend with. The temperature often sank to 30 to 40 degrees below zero, Fahrenheit, and water in tubs and pitchers indoors froze solid. (This must have been before the invention of insulation for walls). I got slap-happy one day after 4, and threw eggs, oranges and potatoes on the floor and at the walls, with nary a crack nor a splash resulting. We got water from the well by dropping a pail on the end of a rope. In winter it froze quite stiff, and we had to break the ice with rocks. We also split our own wood from poplar trees supplied to us by the School Board. It was a good thing I had learned to saw and chop trees with my Dad.

Just after Hallowe'en was my biggest calamity. I fainted in snowdrifts, in the school, and in the teacherage, and was finally persuaded to go to see Dr. O'Brien, in Grande Prairie. He feared I had typhoid fever; so I was admitted to the Municipal Hospital, and was in quarantine from everyone, until I had three negative tests from Edmonton. Later the Alberta Health Board declared there had been typhoid germs dormant in the walls of the former log house in which I was teaching. We had to stoke the heater so hard I guess we thawed them into activity, and they visited me, in particular. The Balfours and nurses were really good to me while I was in quarantine. Mary wrote me, and to my parents too, to calm their fears. (But the Hospital garnished my wages for $200. What a blow!)

After Christmas, I returned to teach till the end of June. During that time, Mary and I took turns chording on the piano for dances, doing silly stunts and songs. Remember "The Cannibal King" and "The Poor Old Slave Has Gone to Rest"? We giggled over those and many more. In the Spring, Mary and I directed, acted in, and helped with simple stage scenery for two plays with members of the district. We performed them in several places, and even took them into Grande Prairie. Those of you who took part will remember these times. What headaches, and yet what hilarity!

The parents of our students were very good to us — asking us to their homes for meals, and bringing us supplies of eggs, milk, and garden produce, though little meat. We walked 2½ miles to, and from, Pat Rooney's store, once a week, for mail and supplies. He sold just about everything. It was a great place to shop and to visit, as well as to drink a cup of tea in Mrs. Rooney's parlor.

Altogether, the year was quite an experience for a city girl. We did hours and hours of homework, and worked hard to get our students through their grades. The dances on weekends were unforgettable. (I'd never even seen a square dance, nor a schottische.) Traveling by sleigh, with heated stones and blankets to keep warm, and riding horseback, were all new to me. Mary was a great companion, and we had a happy life in the teacherage. One time ants (I guess they were Army ants) came through a corner of our abode, and marched across and right out the other side of the room — thousands of them. Another time we tried to get rid of mosquitoes by building a big smudgy fire in a washtub at the doorway. I remember trying to direct the smoke indoors by waving a scrub board up and down. I imagine we came out smelling like smoked sausages.

We really did have fun — teachers, pupils and parents. And all for a salary of $600 (minus the amount I had to pay the hospital). What a wonderful year with wonderful people!

I am now the wife of Gordon M. Wilson, of Grande Prairie, Alberta. We reside in Saanichton, near Sidney, B.C.

Schools

LINDSAY SCHOOL SEPT. '34 TO JUNE '36 — by Miss (Lewis) Lambert

There was always a spirit of teamwork at Lindsay. The boys and girls were proud to, again, earn the shield for the best display of Physical Training in the Inspectorate. They were delighted when Elena and Martha Kochalyk brought us honor with their fine showing at the Grande Prairie Musical Festival, in the folkdancing class.

When the older girls organized a Girls' Club to promote local activities, they bravely undertook to order, from Edmonton, a second-hand piano for the school. It was a player piano, with several rolls of music, and when it arrived, great was the joy in the heart of each pupil who had a turn at the pump-pedals, becoming an instant virtuoso at first touch! Recess resounded for some time! The girls paid for the piano with proceeds from dances and raffles.

One spring an enthusiastic group of students and adults went across the river to Debolt to play ball. On



Lindsay High School.

returning to Moody's Crossing, after a good sports day, the river was found to be in flood. Trees and debris swirled by in the waters. The ferry was immobilized and there was nothing to do but wait. Millions of mosquitoes were delighted, but the travelers were less than enchanted, although, to the youngest, they were uncomplaining. Fortunately, the ferry was able to resume work next day.

These years saw the winters of the deep snow and the deep freeze. We recall driving, by sleigh, to a large party at the Albinatis. During the evening a full-scale blizzard blew up, making it impossible for the guests to leave. In some miraculous way, everyone was eventually bedded down for the night on bed, cot, bench or floor and by morning the storm had abated. The party spirit resumed during a light-hearted breakfast, and then the guests departed, in safety, for home.

Neither intense cold nor deep snow could deter whole families from coming to the Christmas Concert at the school. The Christmas tree had lost most of its needles but loving hands had swathed it with extra garlands and it made a brave showing. On stage was, "The Toymakers Dream" in which every pupil played a part. Ross Ford was the genial toymaker who made the fantasy believable. A concert among family and friends is a joy, and everyone is a star. The gifts and treats later, were, of course, a highlight of the evening. Mrs. LaValley had spent hours pouring over catalogues, weeks in advance, shopping for each boy and girl.

BEZANSON CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

On June 21, 1955, word was received from the Department of Education, in Edmonton, authorizing a change of name from Lindsay School to Bezanson School District of No. 3898.

1955-56: Teachers: Fern Gouchy — Grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 34 pupils. Roy Gouchy, Mrs. Noreen Ford — Grades 5 to 9. 32 pupils. Principal; Roy Gouchy.

1956-57: Teachers: Katherine Byrne. Grade 1 and 2. 27 pupils. Maxine Grade 3, 4, 5, 28 pupils. Bruce Prytuluk, principal and Grades 6 to 9. 32 pupils.

1957-58: Teachers; Mrs. Gertrude Matnie, Miss Shirley Swanson, Gr. 1 to 4. 65 pupils. Bruce Prytuluk, Gr. 5 to 9. 26 pupils. Henry Schellenberg, principal and Gr. 7 to 11. 31 pupils.



Bezanson Teacherage.

1958-59: Teachers: Mrs. Phyllis E. Stewart, Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 1,2,3. 56 pupils. Mrs. Noreen Ford — Grs. 4 to 6. 56 pupils. Charles E. Roberts — Grs. 7 to 9. 31 pupils and Principal.

1959-60: Teachers: Mrs. Phyllis E. Stewart — Gr. 1, 2, 34 pupils. Mrs. Marie Ames, Mrs. Noreen Ford — Gr. 3 to 6, 53 pupils. Henry Leslie Wiebe — principal and Gr. 7,8,9, 34 pupils. Sub. Teacher — Robert Toews.

1960-61: Teachers: Mrs. Petrona T. Wilcox — Gr. 1, 22 pupils. Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 2, 3, 30 pupils. Mrs. Phyllis Stewart — Gr. 4, 6, 22 pupils. Henry Leslie Wiebe — Gr. 7, 8, 28 pupils. Mrs. Noreen Ford — Gr. 5, 9, 30 pupils. Henry Leslie Wiebe — Principal. Sub. teacher — Hilda L. Schweitzer.

1961-62: Teachers: Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga — Gr. 1, 2, 29 pupils. Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 3, 23 pupils, Miss Hilda Schweitzer — Gr. 4, 5, 30 pupils. Helen M. Garant — Gr. 6, 23 pupils. Verna Algar — Gr. 7, 8, 26 pupils. Mrs. Noreen Ford — principal and Gr. 9, 15 pupils. Sub. teachers — Drysdale, Swaffield, Baynes, Thompson and Platt.

1962-63: Teachers: Mrs. M. Snider, Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 1, 2, 3, 39 pupils. Joyce Volk — Gr. 4, 22 pupils. Mrs. Helen Garant, V. Willoughby — Gr. 5, 6, 29 pupils. Mrs. Noreen Ford — Gr. 7, 8, 36 pupils. Mr. W. Maxwell — principal and Gr. 9. 13 pupils. Mr. W. Maxwell — principal and Gr. 9. 13 pupils. Sub. teachers — Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga and Mrs. J. Thompson.



Bezanson Consolidated School built in 1957.

1963-64: Teachers: Mrs. M. Snider, Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 1, 2, 3, 39 pupils. Joyce M. Volk — 4, 5, 25 pupils. W. Maxwell — principal and Gr. 6. H. M. Garant — Gr. 7, 8, 38 pupils. Sub. teacher: V. Willoughby.

1964-65: Teachers: Mrs. M. Snider, Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 1, 2, 3, 39 pupils. H. M. Garant — Gr. 4, 5, 39 pupils. Mrs. Alma Ford — Gr. 6. 22 pupils. Mrs. Noreen Ford — principal and Gr. 7, 8, 28 pupils.

1965-66: Teachers: Mrs. M. Snider, Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 1, 2, 3, 37 pupils. Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga, Mrs. Alma Ford — Gr. 4, 5, 6, 48 pupils. Mrs. Noreen Ford — Gr. 7, 8, 36 pupils. W. Maxwell — principal and Gr. 9, 16 pupils.

1966-67: Teachers: Mrs. M. Snider — Gr. 1, 2, 20 pupils. Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 3, 13 pupils. Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga — Gr. 4, 5, 25 pupils. Mrs. Alma Ford — Gr. 6, 21 pupils. Mrs. Noreen Ford — Gr. 7, 8, 36 pupils. W. Maxwell — principal and Gr. 9, 12 pupils.

1967-68: Teachers: Mrs. M. Snider — Gr. 1, 2, 16 pupils. Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 3, 4, 22 pupils. Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga — Gr. 5, 12 pupils. Mrs. Alma Ford — Gr. 6, 10 pupils. Mrs. Noreen Ford — Gr. 7, 8, 32 pupils. W. Maxwell — principal and Gr. 9, 22 pupils.

1968-69: Teachers: Mrs. M. Snider— Gr. 1, 2, 15 pupils. Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 3, 4, 20 pupils. Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga — Gr. 5, 6, 27 pupils. Mrs. Noreen Ford — Gr. 7, 8, 30 pupils. W. Maxwell — principal and Gr. 9, 11 pupils.

1969-70: Teachers: Mrs. M. Snider — Gr. 1, 2, 17 pupils. Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 3, 4, 22 pupils. Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga — Gr. 5, 6, 22 pupils. Mrs. Noreen Ford — Gr. 7, 8, 22 pupils. R. H. Myrick — principal and Gr. 9, 20 pupils. Part time teachers: Mrs. Olga Frieson and Mr. J. Reid.

1970-71: Teachers: Mrs. M. Snider — Gr. 1, 2, 22 pupils. Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 3, 4, 15 pupils. Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga — principal and Gr. 5, 6, 14 pupils. Part time teacher — Mrs. Olga Frieson.

1971-72 Teachers: Mrs. M. Snider — Gr. 1, 2, 23 pupils. Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 3, 4, 18 pupils. Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga — Gr. 5, 6, 17 pupils: and principal.

1972-73: Teachers: Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 1, 2, 3, 30 pupils. Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga — principal and Gr. 4, 5, 6, 24 pupils.

1973-74: Teachers: Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 1, 2, 3, 25 pupils. Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga — principal and Gr. 4, 5, 6, 25.

1974-75: Teachers: Mrs. Marie Ames — GR. 1, 2, 3, Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga principal and Gr. 4, 5, 6, 32 pupils. Mrs. Anderson — Gr. 1-6.

1975-76: Teachers: Mrs. Marie Ames — Gr. 1, 2, 3, 17 pupils. Mrs. Sadie Sarmaga — Gr. 4, 5, 6, 34 pupils and principal. Mrs. Anderson — Gr. 1-6.

Sports

EARLY BEZANSON BALL TEAMS

In the first years, the settlement had two baseball teams; Glen Leslie and Bezanson. Sometimes, competition got really hot. One of the first teams consisted of; Ern Ford, Fred Ames, Oscar Regnier, George Ames, Ernie Robideau, Tom LaValley, Tom Rice, Louie Withers and Harvey Newton, the Lindsay school teacher.

They played their games on a little flat meadow on Will and Ern's field, just a little south of Roy Ames', or on a corner of Tom LaValley's field, a little east of the Lindsay school. We are not sure, any more, which position each played, but from the stories that were told, they were really in there slugging. They lost their ball in the bush, if someone hit it too hard or, sometimes, one would take a header, chasing a ball on the rough ground. In one game, Tom LaValley, whose sprained ankle was as big as a stovepipe, was carried to his door by Ernie Robideau and Tom Rice, who made a chair with their arms.

About this time, the people of Bezanson decided that they needed a proper ball field. It was agreed that the corner of the school section, across the road, east of Rooney's store, would be a perfect location. When people came to watch or play ball, they could pick up their mail or do some grocery shopping. Arrangements were made with the Coney boys to brush the 10 acres. Ted and Jim Coney, Tom Burrows and Scotty Fitzsimmons, did the brushing, and picked the roots after Ira McLaughlin broke the land. People thought that they were crazy, and it took three years, but the job of cutting down the hill where the hall now sits, to fill in the low place where the ball diamond would be, was finely finished. Each farmer donated his team for a week or two of work on a frezno.

A later ball team was made up of; Bob Fenton, and Fred Ames, as pitchers, Oscar Regnier as catcher, George Ames, Tom LaValley, Tom Rice, Ernie Robideau and Tom Mould, (who stayed for a season or two with Bill Hall), and Erwin Ferris.

The next Bezanson team was made up of Bob Anderson, as manager, then Bob Fenton. Earl McLaughlin and Lloyd Nellis as pitchers. Elmer McLaughlin as catcher. Ted, Bill and Orval Nellis, Carl Flohr, Joe Boyartchuk, Clyde Norton and Charlie Ford. This was the first team to wear real honest-to-goodness ball uniforms, with BELL FLEMING across the front. There was fierce competition and lively betting, between Grande Prairie, Glen Leslie, Debolt and this team. The men remember how two big men stood toe-to-toe ready to fight over some play, when Ray Robideau walked between them, pushed them apart and told them to "come on now, let's keep this thing friendly". Grande Prairie and Debolt ex-players must surely still smart from the ragging the Bezanson women gave them. But, when it was all over, there never seemed to be too many hard feelings. It was all great fun!

The next team, formed after the war, was the 'Eagles', with flashy white and red uniforms. Fred Ames, as manager. Johnnie Bealman, Irving Ames, Norman and Lyle Berg, Henry Diederich, Don Olson, Lloyd, Harry and Ted Nellis, Dick Hayworth, Russell Ames and Elmer and Hap McLaughlin.

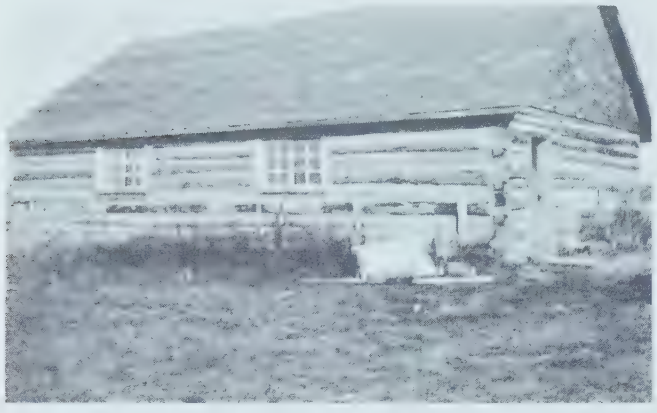
By this time, sports had become organized so you had to join a league to be able to play, then travel near and far, over the area. The season began early and ran later in the year, making it hard to get away from the farm to play. So Hap was only with the team for one or two seasons. The team went on to win many times.

Miscellaneous Anecdotes

BEZANSON HAMLET AND COMMUNITY

Bezanson began, a short 70 years ago, on a flat on the Smoky River, as the dream city of A. M. Bezanson. What was then, wilderness with game trails, wagon roads and a little log school and church combined, has now developed into a progressive, well-organized, farming community, that Mr. Bezanson would be proud of.

Bezanson hamlet was moved from the river, to its present site adjacent to Highway No. 34, about five miles west of the Smoky Bridge crossing. The community now has graded gravel roads, paved highway, centralized school served by buses, telephones and electric power. These changes didn't come easy as the stories of the people will prove. They will also prove that the people were quite able to meet the challenge with a lot of dignity, and enjoyment.



Bezanson Hall, built in 1923 — burned down in 1949.

Their first efforts were to build schools and a church, then the Bezanson Community Hall. What happy memories we all have, of the old hall, where such wonderous dances were held. People came by wagon, car, horseback, or walked, to dance to the music of a local orchestra.

The 'Eastland' orchestra was one of the first, in the early twenties, consisting of; Norman Greenwood, Al Alderman and Mrs. Charlie (Marie) Johnson. Everyone else enjoyed dancing with their neighbors and school mates. For the box socials, usually held to raise money for gifts and candy for the Christmas concerts, the girls would spend days creating beautiful boxes; heart shaped, covered wagons, house shapes, or just boxes covered with crepe paper and tinsel. These they kept carefully hidden so that no-one would know which was theirs. I'm sure the right boy was given a very exact description before the big night when the boxes were auctioned off. The highest bidder shared the delicious midnight lunch packed inside, with the girl, whose box he had bought.

The crowd had great fun at one box social, when Vera Ford dressed Nels McLaughlin in a long gown as the lovely 'Molly McGee' and packed a fancy box for her. Rex Patterson was the lucky man to buy her box. As he danced with her, he wondered who she was, then, while eating lunch, noticed Molly's manly boots. At another box social, two men were searching for the mysterious Magg O'Flairity and Biddy Doyal, whose boxes they had bought.

The 24th of May picnics were usually at Alf Olsons pasture or the river banks. The young boys were sent to find enough poplar trees, with green leaves, to build an ice-cream and hot dog booth at the west side of the hall. The ball diamond was leveled and laid out ready for the baseball games in Rex Pattersons' field. The boys and girls would get their ponies ready for the horse race which was run on the road or in Alf Olson's field. They would practice their jumping and running for the foot races, broad jump, three-legged race, potato sack race, pole vaulting and the pillow fight, which was done while sitting astraddle a hitching rail. Some years, a boxing ring was set up, where the young men could show their skills. There was always the gold digging ring, where you could place a peg for 25 cents and the one closest to the $5 gold piece, would win it. The whole community would turn out. The kids, who won 5 cent or 10 cent prizes at racing, would run to buy an ice-cream cone before the ice-cream became too soft, as there were no fridges or freezers.

The Lindsay, Bezanson and Crystal Creek schools would have their best girls' basketball teams there, to play for a grand prize of $5. Many of the prizes were donated by Grande Prairie businessmen.

Bezanson always had a pretty good mens' baseball team ready to give the Glen Leslie or Debolt teams a good game. Everyone had to rush home to do the evening chores and leave the tired kids safe in bed with the babysitter keeping a careful eye on things, while the older ones returned for the big dance at night. A clean-up the next day would end the picnic for another year.

The next big day for the kids, was the school picnic on the last day of school, with cakes, salads, sandwiches and home-made ice-cream.

The Debolt Sports was, and still is, a big day. The young bucks would be off again with their ponies behind a Bennett buggy or wagon, for two days of horse racing, steer riding, bucking horse riding and ball games. Some years, Mrs. Gladys Moon would take the young people and camp out, taking in both days.

There were other memorable summers, when Mrs. Moon, with two or three other women, would take as many young people from the district, that could get away from farm duties, to Sturgeon Lake for a week or two of swimming, fishing, and softball games with the young Indian boys.

How lovely were the warm sunny days of berry picking across the Wapiti or along the Smoky banks, visiting with neighbors and sharing your lunch in the shade of the trees. Then bumping home in a wagon, buggy or an old car that had to be helped up the steep hills.

A masquerade ball was always a source of excitement among the women. Some of the most elegant gowns you'd ever hope to see, were fashioned from crepe paper ruffles trimmed with tinsel, borrowed from the Christmas tree decorations, and sewn to flour-sacking that had worn too thin to be used as pillow cases or tea towels. The mens clown, sailor or whatever, costumes were sewn from dyed flour or sugar sacking. There were all kinds of schemes to fool

neighbors and families. Some took their masks and costumes to the hall, in boxes and dressed behind a curtained-off part on the stage. Then, they stepped out to mix with the crowd.

One time, Vera Ford dressed as a man, wore a mask with a huge bulge of a nose. Fred Ames went as the wife; dressed in a white cotton and lace dress of the past, gleaned from a trunk in the attic. He teetered along on high heels and wore a lady's mask with a long sharp beak of a nose. The crowd were fooled that time! The next day, they laughed and chattered over the fun that was had.

The threshers' dances were always very special affairs, beginning a new season after the long harvest. The girls and women would try to have new dresses or shoes, for that affair.

If a young couple were getting married, the date was usually set for a day in November to be sure that the fall work would be done and the neighbors free to attend their dance. Older people, of Bezanson, will always remember the trouble they had getting to the dances, getting stuck on the muddy rutted roads, with the Model 'T's, Model 'A's or whatever car they had. In the winter, cabooses on front bobs of sleighs, cutters or just open sleighs, were used. But everyone always turned out, dressed in their best.

Times changed, as the stories will tell, with wedding bells and World War II breaking up the community.

The first councillors were; Ed Nickol, Harry Severson, Frank Flannery, Nels McLaughlin, Wes Ferris, Ira McLaughlin and Tommy Warden. The early councillors duties were to have trails cut through the bush, following the road allowances as closely as possible, filling potholes, putting in the wooden culverts or bridges and putting corduroy across a muskeg, if necessary.

By the thirties, the roads were being graded. Ira McLaughlin was counselor and settled many an argument, between neighbors standing on a roadway shouting their grievances, on where a culvert should go or which way the water should run. Ira's way of not only listening, but of hearing what people were saying, won him the nomination as the district Social Credit M.L.A.



Bezanson Curling rink.

During the war, a push we call progress, was being felt. Combines slowly replaced the old threshing machines, as tractors took over field work from the horses. A big new bridge replaced the ferry on the Smoky river. There was more money now, so new houses began replacing old ones, and young couples built new homes. Jobs became easier to acquire with more pay. The men took jobs off their farms, so milk cows, pigs and chickens were past history on many of them. Wood stoves and heaters, were also things of the past as oil, propane and, later, electricity, took over. The telephone poles, that were only seen along the highway before, began the march down each side road, followed by the power lines, until all farms and homes were serviced. The telephone wires were put underground in the early 70's. Women, being freed from many household chores, began taking jobs to help acquire the new conveniences of life: in-door plumbing, electric freezers, fridges, furnaces and color T.V.s and, later, holiday trailers, cars, carpets and stereos.

In August, 1949, the old Bezanson hall burned to the ground, ending an era that can never be replaced. The community could hardly imagine life without their dance hall. So, after a lot of discussion on the pros and cons, it was decided to rebuild on the sports grounds at the hamlet of Bezanson. The little Lindsay school and the high school had already been moved to their corner location there. On a lovely day, November 2, 1949, the whole community turned out, under the guidance of Walter Scott, to pour cement for the basement of the new hall. The men and boys, of the district, worked like beavers, to get the building closed in and the furnace in before the cold weather came, as many families would be going to Norton's or Moon's sawmills for the winter. Through a great deal of extra work and a tremendous effort by Harold Ford, Neil McLaughlin, Oscar Albinati, Lloyd Nellis and many others, the hall was ready for the New Year's dance.

It was a little strange in the big new hall on the hill, but, after the opening ceremonies with Oscar Albinati as chairman and speeches from several people (Neil McLaughlin filled in for Nels McLaughlin, who chickened-out at the last minute, representing the Legion), the big dance began. Everyone danced and pranced to the music of Fords orchestra, got themselves kissed if they danced under the mistletoe, donned paper hats, blew whistles and threw confetti and streamers, just like in the old hall.

But, there was still the big job of paying back the loan which was taken out to build the hall. Here again, the community pulled together. The women clubs made, and raffled, quilts, and had fowl suppers. The stampede helped too, with the clubs donating their day's work of running the booths. These efforts, along with the wonderful support from Grande Prairie, Goodwin, DeBolt, Crystal Creek, Teepee Creek and all the other districts, allowed the hall committee to pay off the loan three years later, and to hold a big free dance to celebrate and burn the mortgage.

Soon, it was decided to have Saturday evening picture shows, and a new floor was needed. So, more loans were taken out, and paid off.

There have been great improvements on the dance hall in the past 26 years. The inside has been painted



Bezanson Community Hall.

and propane furnaces replace the old coal one. It is now hooked on to the power line in place of the power plant that was formerly used for lighting. But plumbing is still a big problem.

The next items the community went after, were a Legion Hut and a curling rink, which were both built and are enjoyed by all.

But the community has changed; farms have been sold and neighbors don't know each other any more. The music in the hall has changed too. The older folk are unable to dance to the new beat. The young people race, to and fro, on snowmobiles, motor bikes, ten-speed bicycles, or in high-speed cars. There is no wood or water to carry, no cream separator to turn, or cows to milk on most farms, and no lamps to clean and fill with coal oil ready for the night. The new fabrics have made washing much easier, and ironing is almost a thing of the past.

Everyone seems to be dashing off some place, then home again. You dash down to the blueberry flat, in a car, often not bothering to take a lunch; snatch as many berries as you can, then hurry home again, for there is always something else to be done to-morrow.

The municipalities have merged to form the first county in Alberta. Schools are centralized. Sports are all organized. Parents drive the kids for miles to play ball, skate, take music lessons or swim. And hundreds of dollars are spent on uniforms and equipment.

The people of Bezanson, recall the days past, when their cars were left, sitting by the highway (the old road snowplowed in the winter), two or three miles from home. They drove with a team or walked, that far, with water for the radiator, shovelled the car out of a snowdrift, and were off to Grande Prairie or to a neighbor's. They returned to park the car, drain the radiator, and walk home. Now, your car gets stripped or stolen, while sitting in your own yard. Progress? I wonder!

FROM THE HEARALD TRIBUNE "LAST NIGHT WAS 'BEZANSON NIGHT' "

At the skating rink, the press reported that December 28, 1915, "A merry party comprising 29 of the Bezanson young folks, came to Grande Prairie, guests of the Empire Hotel. From 7.30 until 10 p.m. the rink was crowded. The party included: Herbert Benedick, Henry Benedick, Mr. and Mrs. Colby, Mr. and Mrs. R. Moon, Mrs. Wm. Leonard, W. M. McDonald, Mr. and Mrs. Keys, Miss Gertrude Bezanson, Percy Bezanson Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lupton and daughter, Fred Dewhirst, M. Mitchell, Henry Tripp, Charlie Johnston, Miss Elizabeth Johnston, Bruce Leslie, Mr. and Mrs. Peter J. Moon, Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Bezanson, Mr. and Mrs. Beckham and Dean Fletcher.

Some of the names of the people who lived at the Bezanson Townsite or close by.

A. M. Bezanson (Founder of the townsite), brother P. M. Bezanson, Cecil Evans, James Brookbanks, Harwood, McGowans, J. Kuntz, Alonzo Rice (carpenter and helper), Joe Newman, Wes Bentley, George Casson, William Stobie, Fred and William Parker, George Stewart, George Hadway, Bob and Bill McDonald. Those running stores at different times were: Hall and Peterson, Leonard, Morrisons and Crokens. Billie Bayhan and Joe Thompson had livery barns; Alex Brothston, owned a harness shop and Mart Geary — a blacksmith shop and Charles Doran — a cafe. Carl Peterson and Charlie Tuners, Benedicks, Luptons, Colbys and Henry Tripp. William Mund was one of the first mail carriers on horseback from Grande Prairie to Sturgeon Lake, stopping at Bezanson on the way.

HUNDRED WILLING HANDS PITCH IN TO BUILD — 1954

A hundred willing unpaid hands this week are pushing a home towards completion for the widowed mother of four, in the north end of Grande Prairie.

This is the second time in the past few weeks that the East Smoky Legion has pitched in to help Mrs. Archie Delaney, whose husband was killed in a tractor accident on his Bezanson district farm last summer. Earlier the group organized a plowing bee, of nearly two dozen tractors to complete the fall work on the farm.

The new home, for which initial plans were made by Alvin Delaney and his half brother, Clarence Boyer, soon stirred the co-operative instincts of the East Smoky group.

Earlier this fall, 20 men showed up for the pouring of the foundation. Since the structure got underway late last week, there has been a crew of men, from eight to ten volunteers every day — a different set each day with the exception of Harry Laye, a Grande Prairie carpenter, who is supervising the job, and Alvin Delaney.

Though the project was adopted by the Legion, it has spread throughout the district to take in almost everyone in the Bezanson area — and beyond it.

John Hall of Wanham, an old Army buddy of the late Mr. Delaney and a one time electrician has volunteered to do the wiring.

Rev. M. Fowler of the Sexsmith United Church and former roof layer has undertaken to do all the roofing.

There have been dozens of unsolicited offers of help.

FLOODS CAUSE OVER $1 MILLION DAMAGE TO ROADS, BRIDGES, LOSS OF PROPERTY AND LIVESTOCK — June 22nd, 1972

One of the worst floods in the history of the South Peace caused over $1 million damage to roads, bridges, railways and loss of livestock and property. The City of Grande Prairie was declared in a state of emergency last week as the flooding Wapiti River overflowed its banks and forced closure of the city's pumping station and water treatment plant.

Residents of Grande Prairie were without full resource of water from Tuesday until Saturday evening when services were returned to near normal. The City Fire Department trucks were put into service transporting water to the city and were located at central points were citizens came with all sorts of utensils to carry water to their homes.

Hard hit were farmers and ranchers along the valleys of the Wapiti and Smoky Rivers. The flood waters came so fast that some of the residents only had time to get themselves to safety along with some personal belongings. Loss of livestock and property is estimated in the thousands of dollars.

Roads and bridges in the area were closed because of flooding and washouts. Some bridges were wiped out completely. The N.A.R. bridge north of Grande Prairie at Watino was swept away by the flood waters and it is expected to be several weeks before rail service will be restored.

Hardest hit was the North Canadian Forest Industries bridge south of Grande Prairie. The approaches and bridge were completely destroyed and it is estimated at $400,000 to replace the structure.

Total damage to roads and bridges is estimated over one million dollars.

Many of the residents of the area trekked to the rivers to see the flood waters on the rampage and carrying with it mobile homes, holiday trailers, fuel tanks, granaries and a great many other articles.

It will take many weeks for the clean up operations to be completed and the Provincial Government has offered assistance to the flood victims.

BEZANSON PICNIC AND STAMPEDE — by Arthur Patterson

The first of what became an annual 24th of May picnic was held on the Brookbank's flats in 1914. In 1916 it was held at the Bezanson townsite. The first picnic held at the Bezanson hall, that was later consumed by fire was in 1923. There was two rounds of logs with a rough floor where the dance was held. The last annual picnic was in 1959. The hall was destroyed by fire at the thresher's dance that autumn.

The first Bezanson stampede, known as, THE BIGGEST LITTLE RODEO IN CANADA, was held in 1947. Frank Kocholyk and Bob Fenton were in charge. There were chutes but no corral, the crowd was the outer fence. The next year there was a corral. The corral and fences were rebuilt in 1958, when Harvey Weegar was president.

The first judges were; Rowe Thompson, Rupert Weegar and Frank Kocholyk. Little Breeches Rodeo was introduced in 1959, sponsored by Harold McKay. Trophies were donated by people far and near. Stock was given by Bob McPhee, Pete Moon, Charlie Moon, Earl (Hap) McLaughlin, and Fords. The last stampede was held July 11, 1962. Many people miss the annual picnic and stampede.

RANCH STORIES — related by Alf Moon

An account of a ranch (S.½ 11-71-3-W. 6), on the south side of the Wapiti River.

Jack Blanchard first took a lease in 1915 and lived in a tent. He took a herd of cattle across and started ranching. He finally sold his cattle and went back to Bear Lake to his father's place.

Arnold Christie took over the lease in 1917. He also had a herd of cattle. He built a house while he was there. He stayed two years and sold out.

Next was an American who stayed a year, 1919-1920. The snow was so deep he had a terrible time hauling feed from the farmers straw stacks in Bezanson. He hauled with a team and a sleigh with a hayrack. He had to haul it across the river on the ice. In the spring cattle dropped in price so much, they were worth very little, but he sold out and left.

Harry Showalter, a retired business man, wanted some place to live, to have peace and quiet. In the winter time, he had a nice team of horses and a fancy cutter that he drove to town once in a while. In the summer time, he rode horseback, swimming the horse behind the boat. He had one lovely bay mare with long black wavy mane, he later sold to Rex Patterson. However he was good to the people of Bezanson. When they wanted to go picking raspberries (which were real good for years along the river, about a mile from the crossing) he would take them across a few at a time in his row boat and then when they came back with their pails full, and tired out, he would take them all back again.

One winter he went back to Michigan, U.S.A. He used to get the Grande Prairie paper (editor was Mr. Yule) and read everything there was to read. He lived there about four years. He was a man who really liked his whiskey, he bought the very best.

After he left, some of the neighbours in Bezanson leased this ranch for summer pasture for their cattle.

Next a Mr. Penman and son Johnny came from Australia. They brought a herd of cattle to Grande Prairie by train, then walked them out to Bezanson, down the Wapiti River hill and forded them across the river to the lease. They didn't last too long at this job. Johnny came to stay at Marvin Jensen's. Johnny and his dad built a good sized house on the lease while they lived there. The other one had burned down. When Johnny was at Marvin's, they went over and tore the house down and Marvin used it to put new floors in his house and partitions, etc. Mr. Penman went to Jack Stark's and stayed one winter. While he was there he built the first covered cab on a grain box, for Bert Ogden, for hauling grain. It had a stove in it and was much more comfortable than riding out in the open. They both (Johnny and his dad) went back to Australia.

After this Earl (Hap) McLaughlin leased the ranch and each summer takes his cattle over there.

SAW MILL STORIES

(1) In 1911 the Argenaut Saw Mill — Mouth of the Muskeg Creek by the Wapiti River. Billie Rae was the promoter. Henry Roberts was manager and ran the saw mill. Some of the men that worked there were Charlie Stewart, Lou Fowler, Sammie and Charlie Dunlop. They made lumber-flooring, siding and had a shingle mill also. About 1914, they moved their mill to east of Webster, Alberta. The first lumber buildings built in Grande Prairie were from this mill.

(2) In 1914, Cook and Boyd had a saw mill by Moody's near the Smoky River (where the bridge is now.) A lot of Glen Leslie boys worked here.

(3) In 1916 or '17, Shortreed and Rosser had a saw mill six miles south of the Glen Leslie Presbyterian Church. They rafted lumber via the Wapiti and Smoky Rivers to Peace River town.

(4) In 1926 or 27, Lorne McLaughlin was the instigator that started this saw mill, that is, the Cook and Sedore mill. They had their mill on the south side of the Wapiti River. In 1929, Alf. Moon contracted to haul lumber from here to across the road from the Glen Leslie store which was built on the northwest corner of N.W. 36-71-4-W. 6. Here it was stocked, piled and sold.

(5) In 1935, Charlie Moon had a saw mill on the north side of the Wapiti River about two miles up the River from where the Argenaut saw mill had been (mouth of Muskeg Creek). This was in operation for four years. The Bezanson and Glen Leslie men made up the crew. Wages were 1000 board feet of lumber per month, which was worth $10.00. What a differnce today. It is $200 or more per 1000 board feet, and that is the cheapest grade!

FORMER RESIDENTS OF THE LINDSAY DISTRICT WHO HOMESTEADED IN THE 1900's

These are the early settlers, who are still remembered, but we were unable to trace in order to obtain their stories for this book.

NORMAN SAVARD homesteaded N.W. 33-72-3 W6th, in 1915. This quarter was owned by John Diedrich and now belongs to Harvey Bulford.

CHRISTIAN SINCLAIR, in 1918, homesteaded N.W. 25-72-3 W6th. After the Lindsay School was built, the children, George, Elizabeth and Louise, received a few years of their education there. The family left our district. This land is now owned by Paul and Annie Menard.

ALBERT E. W. ROBERTS filed on N.E. 7-72-2 W6th, in 1914. The quarter is now owned by Hap and Myrt McLaughlin.

JOHN ROBERTSON homesteaded S.W. 16-72-3 W6th, in 1916, and farmed for a few years, before leaving this area. It was owned by Fred Ford, and is now owned by Cliff Innes.

ALFRED SUMMERS, in 1916, homesteaded S.E. 12-72-3 W6th. This quarter was not proven up and later Alfred Bell homesteaded on this farm. Ira McLaughlin owned it for years and it now belongs to Hap and Myrt McLaughlin.

ALFRED GILBY, in 1917, homesteaded S.E. 10-72-3 W6th, and farmed it for 8 or 9 years. He sold out to Peter Ramsey and moved to the Wembley area, where he farmed for many years.

CHASE WISEMAN filed on S.W. 10-72-3 W6th, in 1917. Peter Ramsay purchased this land. Later he sold the half section to Rupert Weegar, who owns it to date.

JOHN G. MATHEWS — N.E. 9-72-3 W6th was homesteaded by Mathews in 1915. The Fords bought and farmed it up until recent years, when it was sold to George Forest.

JOHN JOSEPH McDOUGELL homesteaded S.W. 30-72-2 W6th, in 1916. This quarter was later farmed by Thomas Burt and, after World War II, it was purchased by Ross and Noreen Ford.

MRS. BETSY BELCOURT filed on N.W. 18-72-2 W6th, in 1915. After the death of her husband, this quarter was owned by her father, Louie Calliou. She married Joe Beattie and lived on the S.E. 25-72-3 W6th. Her son, Norman Belcourt, farmed the latter after the family left the district. Bohdan Hawryluk bought this place and it was purchased from him later, by Arne LaValley.

FRED THOMPSON homesteaded, in 1913, the S.W. 7-72-2 W6th. This quarter later became Mr. Ed Peckham's soldier's grant in 1918 or 1919. Mr. Peckham and family moved to Bezanson to farm. Ed sold out to his son-in-law, Arthur Reece, and Mr. and Mrs. Peckham returned to Sexsmith. Art and Gladys Reece live here to date.

ALEX HERMANSTEN homesteaded the S.W. 7-72-2 W6th and acquired the A. Roberts land, N.E. 7-72-2 W6th. He farmed this land until his death, in 1930. Jack Innes bought this estate, around 1931, and it is now owned by Hap and Myrt McLaughlin.

PATRICK J. MALLOY filed on N.W. 16-72-3 W6th, in 1915, and he farmed here for years. Charles Ames recalls, on one of his prospecting expeditions in British Columbia, Pat was among the crew that went from this area. Later, Malloy sold this farm to Mr. A. Cumberworth. Don and Rosie Ames now own this quarter.

ROBERT CALLIOU filed on N.W. 13-72-3 W6th, in 1913. It was, later, bought by Oscar Albinati. He sold to Harry Tschritter; then George Stevens purchased it. Mr. and Mrs. Victor Auclair now own this quarter.

JOHN DUMAS, brother of Henry, homesteaded N.W. 22-72-3 W6th, and this was farmed by the Frank Dumas family.

SYLVESTER BELCOURT homesteaded N.E. 28-72-3 W6th, which was later purchased by Clarence Field, then owned by Haviland Bulford and, in 1966, Gordon and Betty Wathen bought this land.

FRANK CARTER filed on N.E. 26-72-3 W6th, and his father, David W. Carter, homesteaded N.E. 35-72-3 W6th, in 1918. Frank was active in getting the Lindsay school organized and built, in the early 1920's. His sister, Miss E. Carter, was the first teacher of the new school. She married Bill Welsh, the contractor, who built the school.

ROBERT CORMEAR farmed N.E. 33-72-3 W6th, which was later, owned by Pat Rooney, who sold to Stan Sarmaga.

JOHN SMART filed on N.W. 15-72-3 W6th, in 1916.

MR. CLARENCE W. FIELD homesteaded N.W. 34-72-3 W6th, in 1918. Mr. and Mrs. Field farmed here for many years. Mr. Field was a photographer by trade.

Pictures of Interest



Bezanson gang getting logs out at Charlie Moon's mill for curling rink — 1938.



Bezanson General Store.



Even the cooks had to pull a saw! 1938.



Bezanson Stampede — 1957.



Bezanson Legion Hut.



W. Kochalyks threshing outfit.



Seeding time back in the 1930's on the W. Kochalyk farm. Strictly horsepower!



Bezanson School Bus.



Ewart Ellis hauling grain.



Hauling water the hard way — Robert Cochrane in front, Floyd Totten bringing up the rear!



Donald McPhearson throwing blocks, Howard Anderson sawing. Jack Kair, Hugh Parkhill, Carlson in fir cap.



Ice jam on the Smoky River on June 5th, 1920. Charlie and George Ames, and Ern Ford.



Old Hart-Parr Oil Pull Tractor, from the Calgary area, that broke down and was left on the Rex Patterson farm in 1930's.



Hardin and Whitbeck putting up ice for summer drinking water.



The W. Kochalyk threshing crew of late '30's or early '40's with their teams in the background.



Doreen Smashnuk giving a helping hand.



Typical early homestead.

WEST SMOKY LEGION 244

In 1949, the veterans of the districts decided to form a branch of the Legion, so with the help of Ellis Turner and Wade Matlock from the East Smoky Branch 89 of Debolt, they received the Charter, March 4, 1949.

The names on the Charter are: C. Stewart, J. Mitchell, T. Stark, J. Wales, P. J. Moon, B. Nellis, E. Peckham, R. Ames, R. Ford, V. Patterson, E. Patterson, Nels McLaughlin, G. Ames, Neil McLaughlin, R. Robideau, A. Delaney.

The first meeting was held in the school, then they used the old Bezanson Hall for awhile until it burned down. Then their meetings were held upstairs above Rooney's Store until the new Bezanson Hall was built. That was used until the Legion Hut was built in 1952.

Legion Crest.



Jack Wales and Ed Coney.



Legion Hut Branch No. 244.



Life Membership granted May 8, 1974. Left to right, front row: Nels McLaughlin, Charlie Ames, Roy Robideau. Back Row: George Hanson, Alfred Moon. Dist. Commander — Andy Innes.

The first executives were: President, Nels McLaughlin; Secretary-Treasurer, Neil McLaughlin; Sergeant at Arms, George Hanson, Jack Wales.

They had over 60 members at that time. Now there are only 36. Quite a few have passed away, some have moved, and there has been quite a few associate members taken in.

The Legion has always sponsored the kids of the district in baseball, hockey, swimming lessons. The Legion used to put on a Christmas party. The first one was in 1950. They started with a good family movie, then oranges, candy, and ice cream for everyone, even the adults. After ten years of this, with the crowds getting larger and larger, the Legion decided to cancel the Christmas parties. There were more outsiders than local residents attending.

The present executives are: President, Bruce Fenton; Vice-President, Howard Withers; Secretary-Treasurer, Bertha Dillabough; Sergeant at Arms, Jack Laverick; Padre, Jack Wales; Service Officer, Jack Wales.

HONOR ROLL

H — Honorable discharge during war time
W — Wounded in action
/ Have since died
KA — Killed in action.

LINDSAY
Glen Ames /
Harvey Bulford
Robert Ames
Ross Ford /
Vern Ford /
Roger LaValley /
Zotique Menard
Nelson McLaughlin H
Carmen Miller
Rueben McFadzen /H
Calvin Mueault
Ross Kochalyk
Bohden Hawrelyk H
Orville Nellis
Bill Nellis
Harry Nellis
Earl Norton
Roy Robideau
Peter Robideau
Alfred Robideau
Leo Robideau
Ernest Robideau /
Dorothy Rooney
Donald Rooney KA
John Sarmaga H
Peter Ramsey
Paul Smashnuk KA
William Smashnuk /
Eli Smashnuk /
George Smashnuk /

FITZSIMMONS
James Coney /
Edward Coney
John Coney
Hugh Coney
Walter Baldwin
Mary Burrows
George Fish KA
Pete Kebalo
John Kochalyk
Elliott Love H
Cecil Lebell
Stephen McNally
Peter McNally /
Charles Milner /
Jack Baskerville /
Arthur McKinnon
Bertha Proffitt
Olive Rich
Louis Soroka
Clifford Stearn
Edward Stearn
Jean Repetowski
Alex Spiden /
Frank Vinet
George Vinet /
Riley Simpkins /
Mickey Simpkins /

EAST KLESKUN
George Purvis H
William Purvis W
James Purvis /
John Purvis KA
Raymond Boyer
Clarence Boyer
John Delaney /
Archie Delaney /
John Brown
Ross Thompson
Martin Czupryk

BEZANSON
George Hanson
Willis Johnston
John Mitchell H
Neil McLaughlin /
Earl McLaughlin H
John Penman
Clayton Stewart
James Stark
Thomas Stark /
Douglas Stark
Vern Patterson /
Marry Moon
Jack Moon
Charles Stewart
Robert Mitchell

SOMME
Thomas Burrows
Hector Burrows
William Burrows
George Burrows
Alex Burrows
David Burrows
John Dorchied
Charles Dorchied KA
Earl Dorchied
Arnold Dryer
Robert Dryer W
William Dryer W
Archie Hackwell
James Pollock
Earl Patterson
Alice Moon
Charles Weaver H
Jack Wales
Howard Withers
Robert Whalen



Carmen Miller.



Leo Robideau.



Geo Fish.



Donald Oatway.



Roger LaValley.



Edwin Oatway.



Emily LaValley.



Rinehart Ladwig.



Roy Robideau and wife.



Stephen McNalley.



George Ames — World War I.



Rudolph Marek.



Gerald Carveth — First World War.



Jeff and Bertha Dillabough.



Jack Baskerville and Elliott Love.



Butch McFadzen.



James Carveth.



Bud Stewart.



Pete Kebalo and Zotique Menard.



Peter McNally and wife and son Barney.



George Vinet.



Frank Vinet.



Neil McLaughlin.



Back Row, L-R: Bill Nellis, Roger LaValley, Ross Kochalyk, Ralph Norton. Front Row: Martin Cooper, Ross Ford, Zatique Menard, Bud Stewart, John Sarmaga.



Ernie Poirier.



Seeing the boys off to war in 1942. Taken at the railway station.



Howard Withers.



Earl Norton.



Hugo Zelling.



Miron McKeeman.



Robert Marek.

WEST SMOKY LADIES AUXILIARY NO. 244

A Ladies Auxiliary of the West Smoky Legion Branch No. 244 was formed. On August 10, 1951 the charter was issued with membership and elected positions as follows:

Mrs. Allie Patterson, Glen Leslie, President.
Mrs. Florence Wales, Glen Leslie, 1st Vice-President
Mrs. Myrtle McLaughlin, Bezanson, 2nd Vice-President
Mrs. Lena Moon, Glen Leslie, Secretary
Miss Isobel Stark, Glen Leslie, Treasurer
Mrs. Hazel Weegar, Bezanson
Mrs. Betty McLaughlin, Glen Leslie
Mrs. Dorothy Stewart, Bezanson
Mrs. Hilda Mitchell, Bezanson
Mrs. Blanch McLaughlin, Bezanson
Mrs. Elizabeth Hanson, Glen Leslie
Mrs. Betty Nellis.

Over the years, the Ladies Auxiliary has seen bad years as well as good in so far as membership participation goes.

On August 7, 1956, West Smoky Ladies with the assistance of Debolt and Grande Prairie, were hostess for the Zone Rally, in the Bezanson Hall.

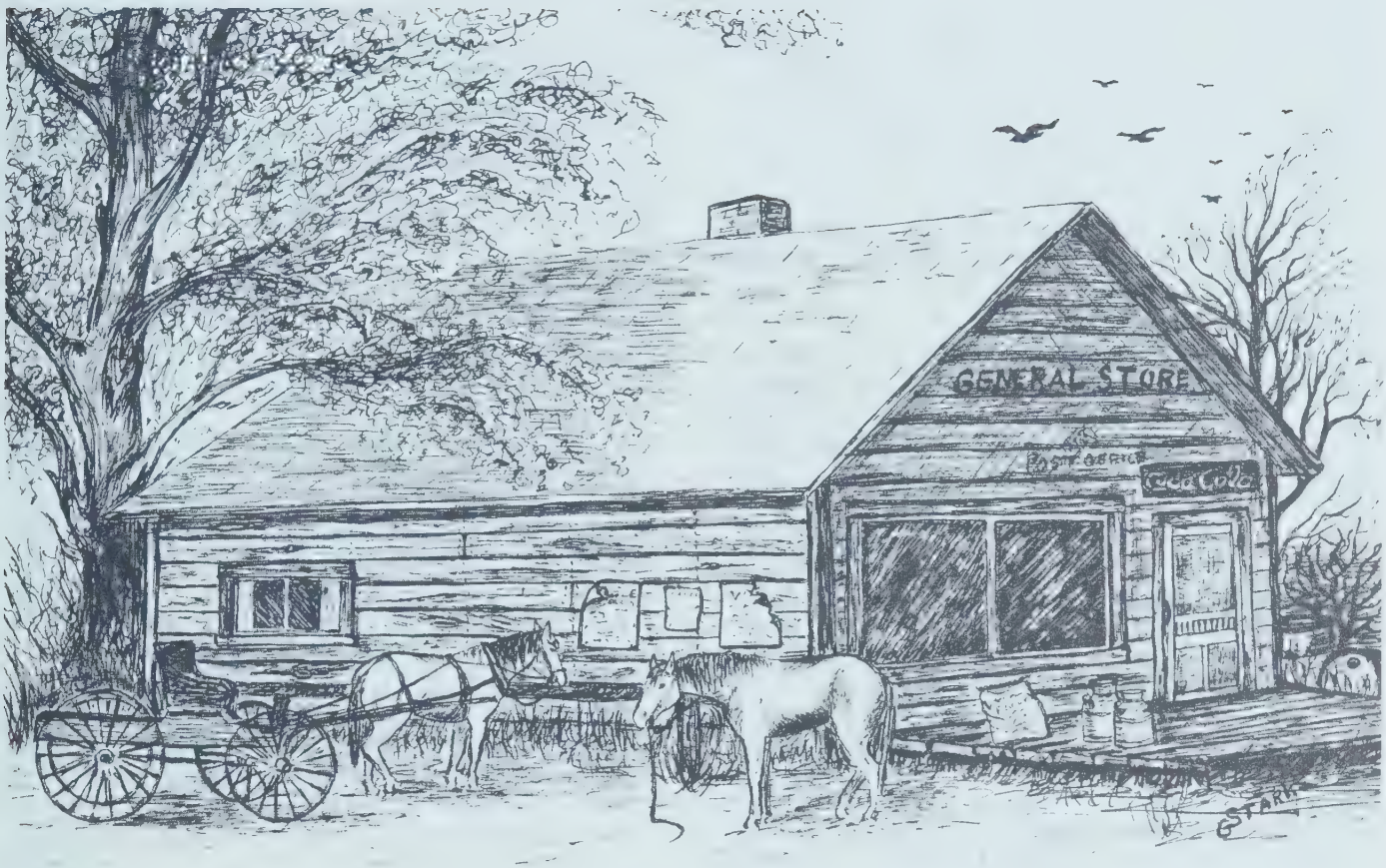
At a Zone Rally held in Beaverlodge in 1957 Mrs. Elizabeth (George) Hansen, of Glen Leslie, was elected Zone Commander a position she held until her death.

The "Legion Hut" as it is called has been our meeting place since it was built. The "Hut" has been used extensively by groups in the area for meetings, bridal showers, wedding anniversaries, tea card parties, banquets and bingo. It was used at one time as a classroom, housing the overflow from Bezanson School.

The Auxiliary has had many money raising projects, at one time a concession booth at the Bezanson Stampede. We have also held Chicken Suppers, teas, wedding banquets, bingo, card parties and bake sales. From these efforts we have been able to help our Legion maintain and improve the "Hut", support the Crippled Children's Program as well as the Veteran's Hospital.

The Senior Citizens have not been forgotten, teas have been held for them. Golden Tulips were distributed to each Senior Citizen in the area, by the Ladies of the Auxiliary for the Legion's Golden Anniversary.

Somme



Family Histories

JACQUES ALTMAN

Jacques Altman filed on S.E. 12-72-4 W6 in 1914. His brother Nick was a carpenter and bricklayer by trade. In 1914 Nick filed on the S.E. 36-71-4 W6. The land was sold to Bert Cocherton in 1920. Bert was a bachelor and a soldier from England. He had purebred Shorthorn cattle, Clydesdale horses, and Yorkshire pigs. He was on the church and school board for many years. He bought Rogers Golden syrup by the 10 lb. pail to put on baking powder biscuits. He died in 1955 and was buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery.

GUS BREDESON

Gus Bredeson came from North Dakota to Canada in 1913. He homesteaded two miles north of Sexsmith. In 1914 he went back to the States and brought his family in over the Edson Trail. They arrived in January in 1915. His wife Emma, two daughters, Inga and Agnes, three sons, Ed, Alfred and Oliver. Coming over the Edson trail in January, the weather was quite good, with sunshine the ten days they were on the road. Gus drove the freight wagon and Inga drove the caboose. The timber wolves howled every night but they felt safe as Gus was a hunter and trapper. Ed had mumps on the trail, but suffered no bad effects from it.

One day one of the freight sleighs went over the hill and buried one of the horses. When they got to the bottom of the hill and dug the horse out, he was not hurt. It took ten hours to get things straight and get going again. What was surprising was that only one chair was broken.

They lived on their farm at Sexsmith for several

years. Inga saw the golden spike being driven by a lady.

Inga married Alfred Olson in 1916. Ed married Mabel Berg and they came to Glen Leslie in 1930 where he homesteaded. Later they purchased some land from Mrs. Bryenton and they are still living there. They have three children, Evelyn (Rycroft) of Grande Prairie, Ernie, who pruchased the home farm, and Marian (Waldner) of Grande Prairie. They got their schooling at Somme. There was not much for recreation in those days. The going sports were soft ball and track meets. Somme did well in these sports. They won the soft ball cup three years in a row, so they got to keep it for good. It is on display at the Harry Belfour school in Grande Prairie.

Alfred married Margaret Berg from LaGlace. They came to Glen Leslie in 1927 and took a homestead where they are still living. They have five children Eileen (Hodges), Grande Prairie, Velda of Grande Prairie, Wilfred of Grimshaw, Lyle, who died in 1973, and Delbert of Grande Prairie.

Oliver attended Somme school for a few years. He is a bachelor and farms his father's farm. He has a trap line along the river. He also cooks for camp crews.

TEWNIS VAN BRENNAN (TONY)

Tony Van Brennan filed on the S.E. 10-72-4 in 1913. Tony was quite progressive and raised quite a number of pigs. He is believed to have had the first radio in the district and was also one of the first to have a new ModelT sedan. He liked to tell about a disaster which happened in his homestead days. He awoke one night and his dog was chasing a skunk around his house. He lit his lantern and loaded his shotgun intending to go out and put a stop to the bad smell. When he opened the door the skunk came in and the dog after it. The result of course was a disaster. In 1927 he sold out to John Ziglemier and relocated east of Sexsmith. From there he moved to Grande Prairie and later to New Westminster where he passed away. The house he built on his homestead still stands today.

Tony was the first to buy a closed car, a Model T sedan. It looked top heavy with the high top and big glass windows. Everyone thought it was dangerous if one was to upset and break the glass. He took some neighbors for a drive one weekend. They were drinking some, and sure enough, the car turned over in the ditch. They righted the car and got it home. Other neighbors heard about the accident and asked Tony if they broke any glass. He answered by saying "joost one bottle."

SIGRART AND GEHARD BERG

Sigrart Berg came to LaGlace in 1915 where he homesteaded. In 1943 he came to the Glen Leslie district where he purchased a quarter of land from Ed Leslie. They had three children, Lillian (Hoggarth) of Buffalo Lake, Merlin, and Roy. The two boys and their mother, Johanna, are on the home farm. The children went to Somme school.

Gehard Berg and wife Tilla with three children, came to Glen Leslie in 1940 from Saskatchewan. They stayed in Glen Leslie for a few years and then purchased land in the Bezanson district and live there now. They have three children — Lyle, Lillian (Cessel), and Norman, all of Bezanson.

JOHN BIELMAN

John Bielman bought the East ½ of 10-72-4 W6 in 1947 from Veterans Land Act. He farmed with power machinery. John was in great demand at the local ball games as a pitcher, for he had pitched in big league in Sask. In 1949 he married Gertrude Hedy, a widow with two daughters and one son. They farmed until 1959 when they moved to Grande Prairie, selling their land to Herman Kimble. John did janitor work in the schools until he retired.

ROBERT BURROWS

The much advertised beauty of Canada and the great opportunities in farming were what prompted Robert Burrows, his wife Mary and their families to come to the Glen Leslie district.

Both Robert and his wife had been previously



Tewnis Brennan house, 1976.



George, David, Leslie and Helen Burrows, 1927.

widowed. From their first marriages the following children were born.

Burrows — Tom (Ladysmith, B.C.), Alex (Montreal), Bill (Calgary), Hector (Faust).

The Pollock family were, John (Grande Prairie), Jim (Victoria), Katherine (Mrs. Pete Donohue: Deceased), May (Mrs. Albert Voz: Deceased), and Alex (Deceased).

From the second marriage: George (Victoria), David (England), Leslie (Grande Prairie), and Helen (Mrs. Jim Horrigan, Grande Prairie).

On March 24, 1927 the largest family to immigrate to Canada, sailed from Glasgow, Scotland on the S.S. Malita. This was the beginning of a long journey. After docking at Halifax, they boarded the train for the trip across Canada to Edmonton, Alberta and then north to Grande Prairie. There they were met by Jim Storm who was then representing the immigration dept., but also turned out to be neighbor and good friend.

Our farm located on the E.½ 12-72-4-W6, was purchased through the Soldier Settlement Board from a Mr. Larue for the sum of $3,450. An outfit of four horses and machinery to start farming was provided.

ARTHUR BRYENTON STORY — by Ada (Delaney) Bryenton — March, 1977

My Mother (Mrs. Delaney) and 6 children left Thessalon, Ontario June 3rd, 1919 and arrived in Grande Prairie, Alberta June 18th. We travelled by train. My Mother was a widow and married Mr. Isaac Boyer of Kleskun Hill, the day we arrived here in Grande Prairie. I had 2 sisters, Lila and Edna, and 3 brothers, Johnny, Archie and Alvin. I was born in Chelmsford, Ontario.

I went to school at East Kleskun. My teacher was Mrs. Jim Storm. After I left school I worked out doing housework.

I met and married Arthur Bryenton, April, 1928. We left Grande Prairie that day in a snowstorm with a cutter and horses for our first farm home on a homestead in Glen Leslie, where we lived for 14 years before moving to Grande Prairie.

We have 4 children: son Ronald, who now lives in Calgary; 3 daughters, Joyce — Mrs. George Anderson, now living in Edmonton; Dorothy — Mrs. David McAthey of Oakville, Ontario; and Gloria — Mrs. Peter Biegel of Grande Prairie. We have 19 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

I also have 3 half-brothers — Clarence, Raymond and Harry Boyer and 1 half-sister Ruth Boyer.



Arthur, Joyce, Ada, Dorothy and Ronald Bryinton at Glen Lesle, 1938.



Arthur Bryinton family, 1969.

MRS. MINNIE BRYENTON — by Gladys (Bryenton) Leslie

Mrs. Minnie Bryenton and family of Edmonton arrived in Grande Prairie on March 10, 1919. Mr. Kenneth Morrison and son Hector met them in Grande Prairie with a wagon drawn by 4 horses. There were no graded roads in those days — just trails with lots of mud and water in the spring of the year. The family arrived the Bezanson Townsite about 3 A.M. The Morrison's had a store and post office there — a large building with the store and living quarters on the ground floor and 10 rooms upstairs. Besides this building, Bezanson had a flour mill, a livery stable, a dance hall, a church and 8 or 10 small houses. At first school was held in the Church. Later a school was built about 3 miles from the townsite to accommodate more children from the surrounding farms.



Ted, Pearl, Arthur, Gladys and Mrs. Minnie Bryinton, 1939.

A ferry crossed the Smoky about a mile and a half from the Townsite. In high water time in the spring, a large iron basket was attached to the ferry cables above the water and this was used to get the mail, necessary supplies and those lassengers who had to cross — from one side of the river to the other.

Mr. Morrison decided to build a store in Grande Prairie and Mrs. Bryenton was asked to manage the Bezanson store and post office. 1919 was the year that many soldiers returned to the Peace River Country and many looked for homesteads in the Goodwin, Debolt, Crooked Creek and Sturgeon Lake areas. Bezanson was an overnight stopping place so Mrs. Bryenton was a very busy person that year.

It was a government decision to move the site of the ferry in 1922 down river about 10 miles where the crossing would be better. The ferry operated at this site until 1949 when the much talked about and much needed Smoky River bridge, became a reality. The present Hamlet of Bezanson is on the main highway to Edmonton.

Following the move of the ferry, the Morrisons closed the store and post office, tore down the building and used the lumber to build another store and post office and dwelling at Glen Leslie. Mrs. Bryenton operated this store for a few years. While there, Mrs. Bryenton spent some of her time proving up her homestead. Following her days work, she drove two and a half miles south to her homestead, to sleep there and return to the store the following morning.

Mrs. Bryenton later moved to Calgary where she worked until she married Mr. Samuel Turner of Debolt, Alta. They resided on the Turner farm where Mrs. Turner was an active community worker. Later they retire to a home on the outskirts of the Hamlet of Debolt. She passed away in the Grande Prairie hospital in 1946. Mr. Turner spent his remaining years in Grande Prairie and died there in 1948.

Mrs. Turner was survived by her son Arthur Bryenton who farmed in the Glen Leslie area. Later he worked in Grande Prairie and is now retired there. Pearl (Mrs. Charlie Moon) lived in the Bezanson district for many years and is now living in Grande Prairie.

Gladys (Mrs. Norman Leslie) lived at Glen Leslie until 1930 when the family moved to Dimsdale. They lived there until retiring to Grande Prairie where she is presently living.

A second son Frederick (Ted) worked for 43 years with the Land Office in Peace River, Grande Prairie and Edmonton. He died in Edmonton in 1970 after a lengthy illness.

HARRY CARD

Harry Card was born in 1885 in Wellington, Ontario. He worked on the railroad for a while, then came over the Edson Trail to the Glen Leslie district. He filed on N.W. 8-72-3-W6 on May 26, 1913. He farmed and maintained roads for the Department of Highways from the Smoky River to the Glen Leslie Corner. He was a bachelor all of his life. A man by the name of "Humpy" Curry lived with him in the early days. He had a brother from the U.S.A. visit him in July of 1950. Harry passed away on January 18, 1952 at the age of 67.



L. to R. Morris Stewart, Clyde Norton, Harry Card, threshing, 1942.

PETER ALBERT DONOHUE — by Patrick & Jean Donohue and Mary & Howard Withers

Our father, Peter Albert Donohue, was born on his father's farm near Erinsville, Ontario on Nov. 25, 1886, the sixth of eight children. His sister and brothers all remained in Ontario, but Dad was more adventurous.

In 1910 he left a good job in Toronto to come west with his cousin, Steve Garrett, also an Erinsville native.



Peter Donahue with family. L. to R. Patrick, Alice, Mary and Bernice.

They worked their way over on threshing crews, at saw mills and on the Grande Trunk Pacific railroad, arriving in Edmonton in 1911. There Steve stayed on to work at a livery stable while Dad headed north for Grande Prairie over the Edson Trail.

He covered the whole distance on foot, taking only a shot gun and a bag of salt. He lived on prairie chickens,

and apparently got his fill since he would never eat wild meat again.

He filed for himself on the N.W.¼ 35-71-4 W6 and for Steve by proxy on the S.W.¼ of the same section, located in the Glen Leslie district between Grande Prairie and Bezanson. His memory of Grande Prairie at that time was that there was "nothing but bush and one log cabin".

After filing on the homesteads he walked back to Edson and went to work in a lumber camp in Salmon Arm, B.C. until the following spring.

Then he travelled to Edmonton where he bought supplies and headed north again, this time with Steve and friend Patty Keho. The route was again the Edson Trail.

When they arrived at their homesteads, Dad and Steve built a log cabin on the line between both quarters, thus saving the building of two cabins and brushed the land with axes. They broke some with just one ox and one horse.

The two men farmed together until 1937, ultimately managing 12 quarters of land with horses and raising a large herd of cattle and many pigs. At one time they had 30 horses. They had a drilled well with a windmill on it that neighbours used for many years. The well was still supplying water up to last year (1976).

Dad was one of the few people in the area not stricken by the flu epidemic of 1918 and he would go from farm to farm, helping neighbours feed their livestock, chop their wood and haul their water. He was on the municipal council at the time, and helped choose a location for the cemetery where the flu victims were buried, the Bear Creek Cemetery south of Grande Prairie.

In 1913 Dad married Catherine Pollack, who had come over from Glasgow, Scotland at the age of 16. She came with her mother and step-father Robert Burrows, both of whom had been widowed and had children from their first marriages. With the children of their new marriage there were 12 children in all — the largest family to migrate to Canada.

Dad and Mom lived on the homestead till 1937, when they moved down to S.E.¼ 3-72-4. In all they had eight children, one of whom died in infancy.

In the fall of 1937 Dad made his last trip back to Ontario, where he sold a carload of cattle and purchased a shiny new 1938 Chev. He went with Tom Warden.

During their years on the farm Dad and Mom were both active in the community. Dad maintained the roads with horses and was secretary of the Somme school district.

A regular church-goer, he helped build the Catholic church in Bezanson. He was also a member of the UFA local, a founding member of the Alberta Wheat Pool local and the Grande Prairie and District Co-op and a life member of the Grande Prairie and District Old Timers' Association.

He was known as a jolly person who liked to dance and was always willing to help his neighbours. He sharpened and fitted horseshoes.

Our family was also the only one in the district with a phone for a while and neighbours would come to use the phone.

We children went to Somme school at first, but due to overcrowded conditions there were later transferred to Crystal Creek. We went to St. Joseph's school in Grande Prairie for high school.



Donahue family, 1976.

In 1953 Dad was unable to continue farming for health reasons and sold his livestock and rented the farm to a neighbour, Earl Dorscheid.

In 1960 Patrick, the oldest son, took over the farm and farmed it till 1967, when he sold it and moved to Whitehorse. Six years later he moved back to Grande Prairie where he operates a trenching business.

In 1967 Dad bought a house in Grande Prairie. A year later he had a stroke and had to spend many years in the Auxiliary Hospital. He passed away in July, 1974 and Mom on May 16, 1976.

They are survived by two sons, five daughters, 16 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Patrick married Jean Radzewon of Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan and has no family. Glenn, also of Grande Prairie, married Brenda Vigen and has two children.

Mary married Howard Withers and lives in the Glen Leslie district. Their five grown-up children all still live in the Grande Prairie area.

Bernice married Derek Lewis and lives in White Rock, B.C. They have three children. Alice married Bob Ringguth, lives in Ft. St. John, B.C. and has three children. Jeannette is unmarried and living in Grande Prairie. Helen married James Kellogg. They have three children and live in Calgary.

EARL DORSCHEID

Earl Dorscheid came to Canada from Windom, Minnesota, U.S.A. with his parents in 1921 at the age of 1½ years. They settled in the Glen Leslie district. He attended school at Crystal Creek. In June 1940, he joined the army. The same year he married Velna (Vee) Parrish. They moved to Camrose, where he was stationed for 3 years. In December 1943 their oldest son, Darrel, was born. In 1945 they moved back to Glen Leslie, where he farmed the original homestead, in partnership with his brother Jack. Three more children were born, Danny, Joanne and Mark. Mark passed away at 5 months.

Darrel married Carol Murphy of Wembley in 1966. They have 2 sons James and Troy. Danny married Janice Wales from Glen Leslie in 1969. They have 3 children, Kevin, Jae-Jay, and Randy. In 1970 Joanne married Gary Rutberg of Crystal Creek. They have a boy and a girl Darren and Jamie Rae. Gary passed away in 1974.

Darrel and Danny are in partnership, farming land which was once their fathers farm, as well as more land which they have acquired. Earl passed away May 31, 1970, but his memories will always remain with his family.

JOHN DORSCHEID

John (Jack) E. Dorscheid was born in the year 1909 at his parents farm near Windom, Minnesota, U.S.A.

In 1921 he came to the Glen Leslie district with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Anton Dorscheid, when they decided to join their daughter and husband, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Kimble, who had arrived the year before.

Jack had three brothers, Arthur, Charles and Earl. His parents bought land owned at that time by a Dr. John Peschong. They lived in a log house with a sod roof for some years. He attended school in the Crystal Creek district along with his two younger brothers.

Years passed and he met and married a school teacher Miss Myrtle Dixon of the Beaverlodge area. But tragedy befell this union; At the birth of their first child, a daughter, (Myrtle Dixon Dorscheid) his wife passed away leaving a very saddened family.

Jack later married Bernice Ames of the Roy Ames family of Bezanson. From this marriage two sons were born. Larry the oldest and then Jerry. Both are residing in the district at this time.

Jack was active in many ways in the community. He enjoyed baseball and was a pitcher on the Glen Leslie team which was made up mainly of neighbors in the district. They played at most of the sports days held in the surrounding districts. Baseball equipment was hard to come by in the hard times; On one occasion while taking part in a tournament in Grande Prairie, one of the team mates was on the outskirts of a game going on, collecting a few of the fowls that came his way and for all intents and purposes lost in the grass. So his team had a few new baseballs to play their games. Times were hard, but there was usually some thing funny such as this to add spice and amusement to things.

Jack farmed and was in the cattle business in the early 1930's. But with prices poor and feed problems, he gave them up as a way of life at that time. His parents passed away in 1939. Brothers Charlie and Earl enlisted in the army as World War II was in progress. The following year Jack also joined; going overseas in 1941. He spent four years in the Army Medical Corps. He lost his brother Charlie who was serving in France at the time. Jack returned in 1945 and joined his brother Earl in farming again.

Times were still very difficult. To make ends meet, they went into the saw mill business during the winter, after crops were harvested. They subcontracted some timber from Charlie Moon who had a mill North of Crooked Creek and each fall gathered up their families and equipment and moved over for the winter. Many of the neighbors came to work in the mill and brought their families. Many of the workers at Moons' Mill also had their families. There was a need for a school. One was built and Mrs. Fred Moon and Mrs. Ron Moody taught there for many years.

Many of these years of millwork were before the bridge was built over the Smokey River. The problem was to move before the Ferry was taken out in the fall and to get back home in the Spring before the ice became too dangerous for crossing.

This way of life finally changed. Farming once more was the way of life. But to help things along, Jack spent a summer and winter with Grande Prairie Lumber Co., building roads and running a Sawmill for them. Then he spent a year with Earl, and Phil Nilsson as foreman at their sawmill. Then another winter was spent as foreman for Ralph and Earl Norton's Cat outfit, cutting lines for Oil Companies south of the Wapiti.

As time passed and the boys grew up, they, along with their Dad, purchased a herd of cattle from Tom Warden and were back in the cattle business. A few years later Jack became involved in County affairs and was elected councillor in 1959, a position he held for six years. During this time, Jack served as chairman of the Agriculture Service Board, and was also named to the school and municipal committees, County Planning and Hospital Board and named Warden of East Smokey Parks. He enjoyed this time in his life, but in 1965 felt he was too involved in farming activities and resigned from county duties.

Jack enjoyed a few years of farming and ranching with his family before passing very suddenly at his home in 1973.

His daughter Myrtle became Mrs. Werner of Edmonton with a family of five.

Larry married Rita Gruneau of Olds, Alberta and they have a son Todd. Jerry married Violet Johnson of Camrose, Alberta. They have a girl Sheila and a boy Darren. Both families reside on the family farm.

THE DRYER STORY — by Arnold Dryer

The dirty thirties began in 1929. In 1930 at Hanna, our wheat yielded 2 bushels to the acre. The government paid the farmers to build round corners on the road as a work incentive. In 1931 there was no sign of a crop to harvest and the government passed a bill to move out the farmers who were willing, by supplying a box car and paying for their transportation to the north country. That's how we came to this country.

We arrived in Grande Prairie in August, 1931. Dad, Bob and Bill travelled with the household effects and machinery in one box car. There was also a car load of horses. The rest of the family including Mabel, Fay, Dave, Iris and Jack, came with Mother on the passenger train.

We moved out to the Eldred farm (which is now Eldoe's Trailer Court). Dad and I got a job threshing with Herman Wendt's outfit at $3 a day for man and team working 13 hours a day. I was just 16 and small for my age. That fall we threshed at Harrison's, Rupert and Pat Carveth's, Oatway's, Knight's, Wilson's, McDonald's and Clarkson's. When threshing was finished, we moved to Glen Leslie and rented the



John Dryer family.

Morrison farm, where we stayed for the next 10 years. Dad traded a horse for a wagon load of potatoes and we lived on those and rabbits that first winter. Dad traded another horse for three loads of green feed.

Daisy was born on Christmas Day, 1931. I can remember meeting Dr. O'Brien at the Glen Leslie store. The rest of the children attended Somme school. In the spring of 1932, I took four of Dad's horses and worked for Pete Moon for $2 a day. Our entertainment in those days was attending all the local dances at Bezanson and Crystal Creek. Admission was 25¢. There were also house parties at Bredeson's and Dorschied's, etc.

The following two springs, I worked for Ross Wales. The next three summers, I followed the Stampede Circuit at Debolt, Wembley, Beaverlodge, Dawson Creek, Rycroft, Peace River and Grande Prairie. I had a fall and broke my arm at Debolt in 1934. The doctor put it in splints and a sling. I went to the dance that night and in the dark the police thought I was hiding a bottle. He grabbed my arm and twisted the splint off. I went back to the doctor. He had passed out on the floor. The next day, I rode in the rain back to Grande Prairie hospital to get my arm reset.

I started to work for Pete Donahue in the fall of 1937. In those days, the hired man was a "jack-of-all-trades", which included baby sitting the four Donahue kids at that time and ever so often they needed the end of a line. In the summer of 1938, we hayed a quarter section on Kleskun Lake, with Steve Garrett and Tom Osborne. Pete and Tom went home at night; Steve and I stayed in the bunk house. Steve did the cooking and I took care of the horses. By the time that job was finished, I knew every pothole and landmark on the Edson Trail — right after supper every night, Steve would relate his experiences on the Trail.

I worked for Pete until I joined the Army in June, 1940. Bob and Bill had joined two months earlier. Mother and Dad bought the Voz land (now east of Patterson Place) in Grande Prairie and moved there in 1941. Jack and Daisy finished their education in Grande Prairie. Dave served in the Army for the last year of the war. Jack served in the Korean War.

Dad died in 1952 and Mother in 1957. The rest of the family are still living.

Bob is at Darwell, Alberta.
Mabel is at Grande Prairie.
Bill is at Nampa, Alberta.
Fay is at Cloverdale, B.C.
Dave is at Victoria, B.C.
Iris is at Saginaw, Michigan.
Jack is at Calgary, Alberta.
Daisy is at Camrose, Alberta.
I, Arnold, live in Grande Prairie.

DUNLOP, CHARLES, GORDON AND SAMUEL

The Dunlops, Charles, Gordon and Samuel, homesteaded in the Glen Leslie district. Charles was a horse trader and had a livery barn in Grande Prairie for many years. Gordon had a taxi business using horses and a car. Samuel worked in real-estate.

FREISSEN

The Corney Friesens have been farming in this area since 1963. Mr. N. Sych and family previously lived on this place. Corney was raised on a farm at LaGlace. He trucked and was in the selling field before going into farming full-time. His wife Wilma, is the daughter of pioneer W. Halstead from the Beaverlodge district. Wilma started her teaching career at Bezanson and then took a few years off to raise a family. She has taught for the city of Grande Prairie and is presently teaching for the County of Grande Prairie.

The Friesens have three children, Sheena, at present attending the Community College, Neil and Marilyn both at the Composite High School.



Ross Wales helping Len Fowler with Homestead House.

LEWIS FOWLER

Lewis Fowler came over the Edson trail with the Leslies and Ross Wales in 1912 and filed on N.W. 36-71-4 W6. He joined the army and sold to Edward Leslie.

BILL GARRETT

Bill Garrett was born in Erinsville, Ontario Feb. 10, 1894. He left Ontario in 1910 and came to Winnipeg, where he worked until 1912. From there he came to Edmonton, then on to Edson. He walked over the Edson trail to file for a homestead at Glen Leslie. He filed on the S.W. 12Tp. 72-4 W6. He cleared his land and worked at sawmills in winter.

In 1923 he married Alice Dumas who had moved to Kleskun Hill from Goose Bay, Quebec, with her mother. They lived with Henry Dumas who homesteaded at Kleskun Hill.



Bill Garrett and Mr. Leroux.

Bill was elected as councillor for the Municipal District in 1926 and held that office until 1948 when he was elected reeve.

In 1930 they had a son, Andrew born November 12.

Bill and Alice enjoyed many sports in the district, horseshoe, soft ball, games and dances at Bezanson.

In 1945 Bob Cochrone and Bill Garrett started Kleskun Hill Park. Bill died in July 28, 1949. In 1950 Mr. Cochrane placed a monument at Kleskun Hill in honor of Bill.

A dream of Bill's was to see a bridge built across the Smokey River; This was opened a short while after Bill's death.

The following year Alice and Andrew sold the farm and moved to Grande Prairie.

Andrew married Lorraine Huber Nov. 7, 1964.

Alice Garrett passed away July 1, 1972.

John Garrett was born in Erinsville, Ontario, July 5, 1896. In 1912 he left for the west, by train, on a harvesters excursion to Saskatchewan where he worked that fall. The following spring he came to Edmonton and worked at a livery barn. He went from Edmonton to Edson and walked the Edson Trail to Glen Leslie district, to join his brothers, Steve and Bill. He filed on a homestead S.W. 14-72-4 W6. He farmed with his brother Bill. During winter months he worked in sawmills south of Grande Prairie.

In 1926 he returned to Ontario where he worked in a cheese factory.

In 1934 he married Bridget Doyle and they returned to Glen Leslie. They travelled by train to Grande Prairie and from there to Glen Leslie by team and buggy. They continued farming and he worked for Hystaad Bros. in the winter months.

In 1938 they had a son, Pat. The following year they sold their farm at Glen Leslie and bought land in the Five Mile district.

In April 1941 Bridget passed away, and Alice and Bill Garrett took care of Pat. John stayed on the farm and worked out in the winter months.

In 1954-1962 he moved to Valemount, B.C. to work for Hystaad Bros. He sold his farm at Five Mile in 1956 and moved to Grande Prairie where he lived until his death Nov. 29, 1974.

Pat Garrett lives in Grande Prairie. He married Muriel Patrick in 1961. They have two children, Kevin and Karen.

STEVE GARRETT

Steve Garrett was born in Erinsville, Ont. and came west in 1910. Steve Garrett and Peter Donahue were cousins. They walked from Edmonton in 1912 to homestead in the Glen Leslie district on the W½ Sec. 35 71 R4 W6. They built one log house on the dividing line between the two quarters. Half on each quarter, so only one hosse was needed to prove up. They worked in sawmills and mines in B.C. and Alberta in the winters. They farmed together and acquired a herd of cattle and many horses.

In 1914 Steve started in May, and by fall had 110 acres broken with one team of oxen and a 14 inch walking plow; about 2000 miles of walking behind a plow. When the sun got hot and the flies came out the oxen would head for the nearest slough, plow and all.

In the thirties Peter married and moved on to other land. Steve farmed till 1939 then rented his farm till 1944 when Charles Wales bought it. Steve stayed till 1948 and raised pigs, then he moved to Grande Prairie. He enjoyed Halloween every year; When he ran out of treats, he would start giving out cans of food. Steve was a clean bachelor and a good cook making the best rice pudding — half raisins. He passed away in 1958.

RALPH & SELMA GIRVAN AND FAMILY

Ralph and Selma Girvan and six children came from Central Saskatchewan in the spring of 1948 having bought the Bert Berry farm the W.½ 1-72-4-6. This was just north of the Glen Leslie Store and Post Office. Ralph had come up earlier in the spring and planted the crop and then returned and drove from Saskatchewan with the family in a half-ton truck. Most of the belongings were shipped by train. Ralph has a mixed farm and raises registered Shorthorn cattle.

Ralph Girvan was born in Saskatchewan and Selma in Minnesota and they were married in March of 1940.

One reason Ralph and Selma Girvan moved from Saskatchewan was in order that their children could attend school near their home.

The children attended the Somme School which was on the south east corner of the same section. The children went to Somme School until it closed in 1956.



Four Generations, Girvan family.

They were then bused to schools in Grande Prairie. Roy being the oldest attended the Grande Prairie High School and the rest attended Harry Balfour. Roy, Jean, Lois and Ellen graduated from the Grande Prairie High School. Lyle and Ellen attended St. Joseph's Business College. Jean and Lois trained and became certified nursing aides.

Roy Girvan

Roy is our eldest son. He married Helen Chop from Dixonville and they have two young daughters. They are presently living at Hudson Hope, B.C. where Roy is paymaster for employees working on the construction of the second dam.

Lyle Girvan

Lyle married Lynne Ross from the Flying Shot District. They have 3 children, a girl and two boys. They are also living at Hudson Hope, B.C. Lyle is the site-manager for the second dam being built on the Peace River.

Harry Girvan

Harry farms in the Goodwin area. He also helps on the home farm. He has a mixed farm but mainly raises cattle and grows grain. Harry bought his first quarter of land from Joe Lenes (Joe Lenes hauled mail and freight from Grande Prairie to Valleyview).

Jean (Girvan) Tissington

After high school Jean became a certified nursing aide and worked at the Grande Prairie Hospital. Jean married Hubert Tissington from the Flying Shot District and they have three children, two girls and a boy. Jean and Hubert farm and their farm consists mainly of growing potatoes.

Lois (Girvan) Dalrymple

Lois having received her training as a certified nursing aide worked in several hospitals — Peace River, Grande Prairie, Stettler and Penticton. She married Bob Dalrymple and they have a small son. They live in Penticton, B.C.

Ellen Girvan

Ellen is presently living in Edmonton and works as a legal secretary there.

WILLIAM L. GUTIERREZ

It was the beginning of January 1928, and I, a nineteen year old greenhorn from Edmonton, was about to begin an adventure that would live with me the rest of my life. After arriving by train at Grande Prairie, I hitched a ride by sleigh to Glen Leslie about fifteen miles to the east where I had been appointed teacher of the Somme School.

At Glen Leslie, Mrs. Bryenton, the post mistress, directed me to Grandpa and Grandma Wales home about ¼ mile south. There I was to board for the first six months of my 5½ years sojourn in the Peace River Country. Although they were both fairly old, they treated me royally during my stay there, and Grandpa Wales even taught me to play "High-Low-Jack" — a card game.



1929 teacher for Somme, Bill Guiterriey at Guy Pattersons.

School at that time was held in the little log church that had been built by the Presbyterians in 1915. It was situated a mile east of the Post Office, perched on a barren treeless knoll with not a flower or tree around it, nor even a fence to enclose the yard. Inside was as bleak as the outside — rough log walls chinked with cracked plaster, ten or so double student desks, a blackboard across the front made of painted wallboard, a teacher's desk with a little bell, a few maps on the walls, a little book cupboard with a few dog-eared school books. In one corner stood the big barrel-like wood burning stove. Such was Somme School 1928.

Here on the first school day in January that year gathered about 15 boys and girls 7 to 15 years of age in grades 1 to 8, all anxious and eager to meet the new teacher and get on with the serious business of education. Some families represented that day were the Ross Wales' — Alfred, Charles, Jack and Betty; the Ott Patterson's — Neil and Earl; Guy Patterson's — Minnie and Mildred; the Hackwell's — Emily, Archie, Grace and Helen; and the Ralph Witherly's — Evelyn, Marjorie. There were an alert group of children bright and cooperative, and as the years progressed I became very fond of them. Although books and equipment were rather scarce we all worked and played hard, and a busy interesting six months passed quickly.

In September, and a new term, I moved to board

with Mrs. Witherly, mother of Ralph Witherly and Mrs. Ott Patterson, a mile east of the school and ½ a mile north. This move enabled me to broaden my association with parents throughout the district and so improve communications with the pupils. Although supplies and equipment were still limited and the school surroundings bleak, 1928-1929 school year was reasonably productive.

In June of 1929 I took leave of absence to return to school in Edmonton to successfully complete my Grade 12 and even do some substitute teaching to replenish my depleted money supply, for this was the beginning of the "Hungry Thirties".

In September 1930 I returned to the Somme School. Now a year older and wiser and with a first class Teacher's Certificate, things looked brighter. I even had a new boarding place — the Ott Patterson's, only a mile from school. Two Patterson boys — Neil and Earl attended school and Art my own age was good company. The whole family was very compatible, and so we had an enjoyable year despite the usual crowded conditions familiar to all homes in those pioneer days.

And to add to the other improvements, we now had a new school, a real school. During my 14 months' absence, a modern school for those days had been built ¼ mile west of the Church. The school yard was fenced, the yard cleared and levelled, swings and teeters erected and a place to play baseball and other active games. A barn was built to the north behind the school because some children rode horses, especially in winter.

The school population, too, increased with the influx of new families into the district. The Brown's with four girls and a boy; the Dryers' with four children; Geraldine Jensen, whose family had moved from dried-out Saskatchewan, and Violet Thompson, whose folks moved to a home about a mile north of the school. And, beginners from the Hackwell's and the Alf Moon's.

The next four years in the new school saw steady and continued improvement in interest and school work. The keen enthusiasm of the children with wholehearted participation in games and sports at recesses and noons with the teacher, the preparation for grade nine examinations, the beginners in grade one and the Christmas Concerts kept pupils and teacher alert and interested.

The main highlight of each year was the Christmas Concert at which Bert Cockerton, the School Secretary, was the Chairman. All the children had parts and the whole community attended.

The usual community dances so common in rural schools in those days were not held in the Somme School. Instead this popular entertainment took place, especially in winter, at the Bezanson Community Hall five miles to the east. Here, too, the Annual Victoria Day Sports Day was held on May 24th with a big dance in the evening and to which people gathered from near and far to celebrate the completion of spring seeding and to mark almost the end of another school year.

After school hours and on weekends there were the social visits to families in the district and beyond — Ed Leslie's at the store, the Norman Moon's, Charles Moon's, Alf Moon's, Ray Patterson's and Ross Wales, to mention a few families; the bridge games where I and Art Patterson went looking for opponents at Guy Patterson's, or the Jensen's; harvesting grain in the falls; hauling ice from the Wapiti for summer cooling and drinking water, and walking to Grande Prairie behind sleigh loads of wheat. I remember a moose hunting expedition to the south of the Wapiti, camping over nights and tramping through the snow during the days, but seeing no moose. I remember Reverend James McNeil from Clairmont coming to hold church services in the old church and also at the Bezanson Hall.

Such are some of the faint recollections of days long past in the early 1930's in the Glen Leslie and Bezanson communities of the Peace River Country. Although any impact of mine on the lives of the pupils in the Somme School was minor, yet I am proud to have served in some small way in their educational, physical and spiritual upbringing. The memory of those years, though dim, will always bring me happiness and contentment with just a wee touch of nostalgia and sadness thrown in.

— Bill Gutierrez

JOHN HACKWELL

Prospector, farmer and pioneer John R. Hackwell was born May 10, 1883 at Boxcobel, Que., youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hackwell (Agnes Arleen Le Deur). He grew up and went to school on his father's farm. At 22, listening to the tales of the Klondike gold rush of 1898 and homesteading in the Peace River country, he decided to go West. He went north to the Yukon spending some years there. In the summer of 1914, he came to the Peace River country to homestead. On the 18th of August, 1914, he filed on the S.E. of 7-72-3-W6 in the Glen Leslie district.

On February 10, 1915, he went home to Quebec. There he met and, the next summer, married Melinda E. Graham, youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Archibald Graham (Agnes Dobri).

A young adventurous school teacher, she proved to have the necessary spirit to follow her husband into pioneering a new country.

In the spring of 1916, they started their journey over the Edson Trail into the Peace River country to Grande Prairie, and on to his homestead at Glen Leslie.

Together they expanded their holdings to a section; their mixed farming operations one of the most productive in the district.

In 1956, they sold out and the couple retired to Grande Prairie.

In poor health, the next year, April 13, 1957, John Hackwell passed away.

His widow resided at her home in Grande Prairie till January 6, 1969, when she passed away.

Survived by one son, Archie of Grande Prairie; and three daughters, Mrs. Emily Lemke of Debolt, Mrs. Grace Laye and Mrs. Helene Warren, both of Grande Prairie and eleven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

THE HIGBEE FAMILY — by Gerald Carveth

Dr. Annie Carveth Higbee was born in Port Hope, Ontario and graduated as a nurse from Toronto General Hospital in 1888. She went on to study medicine and received her medical degree from the University of Toronto in 1893. After practicing briefly she contracted pneumonia and went to California to recover. In Los Angeles, she met and married a High School Principal, Charles E. Higbee and practiced medicine from 1905 to 1911.



Doctor Higbee.

That summer her brother, Arthur W. Carveth, with his two sons, Rupert and Cecil, had gone to the Peace River country in Alberta from Orono, Ont., to locate land. Dr. Higbee was so stimulated on reading her brother's account of this new western country that she made up our mind to go there and see it for herself.

So when Mr. Carveth came back to Ontario at Christmas in 1911 to take his family out west, he found out that the Higbee family had their plans all made and were waiting to go west with him in spite of being told that the country was wild and unsettled and was greatly lacking in the comforts that they had enjoyed.

On the 2nd day of February, 1912, Mr. Carveth left for the west again with a carload of settlers' effects and was followed about a week later by Dr. Higbee, her husband, Prof. Charles E. Higbee and their son Jack, thirteen years of age and Mrs. Carveth and family, on the passenger train.

In Edson, oxen were bought and a caboose with canvas top was built along with freight racks for three more sleighs. On Feb. 20th, the procession started over the 250 miles long Edson Trail with Mr. Carveth in the lead driving oxen on the caboose, Prof. Higbee in second position with a load of freight then young Gerald Carveth with the third ox team hauling flour, sugar and a multitude of other things. Rupert followed driving the Ontario team of horses. Then came the five cows, with Jack or Rita Carveth herding them and in the rear was the odd ox pulling a gorgeous cutter that contained noon feed for the ducks, geese, chickens and pigs and sometimes, bales of hay for the oxen and horses. Jack and Rita alternated with driving the single ox. On the 11th of March, they arrived in the Grande Prairie country without any serious mishaps but with many adventures during which time the thermometer had dropped to 40 below on several mornings. Many times in a half day, the teams had to double-up on the heavy loads on the hills. On the Athabasca and Fraser hills, four teams were necessary to haul the loads to the top.

On the 1st day of April, 1912, Prof. Higbee filed his homestead on the N.E. of 15-72-5 which adjoined Cecil Carveth's land, a cabin was soon erected and Dr. Higbee had her first office in Grande Prairie. But she had bought a South African Scrip located in what was later called the Glen Leslie district, N.E. 36-71-4 and the adjoining S.E. 1-72-4 on the 4th of June, 1912. In order to fulfill the requirements of proving up the parcels of land, the family lived on the homestead six months of the year and on the scrip the other six months during the three years required for residential duties.



Dr. Higbee's cabin on scrip, with grainery in background.

During this time Dr. Higbee was kept very busy as there were many serious accidents from sharp axes — sometimes in the hands of unexperienced axemen and also the new babes were multiplying year by year. It was necessary to open up an office on the banks of Bear Creek in "Prairie City" as Grande Prairie was then called. The Doctor worked in close co-operation with Miss Agnes Baird, the nurse in the hospital, which was situated in a small section of the Rev. Alexander

Forbes residence and later with Miss Olive Ross who succeeded Miss Baird. Dr. Higbee, Miss Baird and Mrs. Forbes did the honors of laying the corner stone for the new Katherine Prittie Hospital on July 22nd, 1913. It opened its doors for patients on June 16, 1914.

As there were no cars in those days, the fifteen mile trip from Glen Leslie to Grande Prairie daily consumed a lot of time. As soon as the land duties were completed, the family moved into the Grande Prairie office which was quite a rest for the tired Doctor. While the Doctor was nearing fifty years of age when she came to the Peace, she had never ridden a horse, so it was with very painful bones she alighted from the saddle on many long rides until she became familiar with the art of riding. Sometimes she would be out all day on a case, arriving home at nightfall to find someone waiting for her. Her pony had to be saddled as sometimes there was no trail cut wide enough for a vehicle. At times the family wondered if she could ever stop long enough to eat, let alone sleep.

Professor Higbee was quite musically inclined and a very entertaining gentleman. He taught at several schools including Lake Saskatoon and McHendry in those early years.

Jack became a Civil Engineer and spent quite a portion of his life as Engineer of the City of Burlington with the water system and surveying for streets and thoroughfares. Jack wrote a few short articles about his experiences in homesteading days: "Now and again we were awakened during the night by someone pounding on the door to tell my mother that she was needed to bring a baby into the world. I would saddle her pony, fasten her physician's bag behind the saddle and she would ride off into the night over faint trails, across streams and through swamps. On one such occasion, mother had to stay several days with a family near a lake. At several consecutive meals she was served swan. Year later, I read that swans live to the age of 100 years. When I related this to mother, she just smiled and said 'It was unnecessary for you to tell me that'."

"The log cabin on the homestead had not been occupied for several months one time when I slid down from the saddle to spend the night there. On entering I found the bed was made up and ready for use but when I threw back the covers I discovered a mouse and her four offspring were there first. I soon disposed of the babies (a mistake I was to discover later) rearranged the bed clothes and went to sleep. However, the distraught mother kept awakening me by crawling over my face and even getting inside the bed clothes with me. Her frantic hunt was very thorough. After shooing her away repeatedly, I left the bed and tried to dispatch her with a broom but this failed. Then I dragged a galvanized tub into the middle of the room, put a chair in it and sat and dozed there until morning."

"When my thoughts turn to the pioneering days on Grande Prairie, I pay silent tribute to the resourceful early settlers — for instance, Floyd Totten a neighboring Glen Leslie bachelor, managed to obtain a pair of chickens at a time when they were very scarce and in due course hatched a setting of eggs. Then Floyd proceeded to train the rooster to perform the duties of mother to the chicks so before long the hen returned to her job of laying more eggs. From a small beginning this enterprising homesteader soon built up a sizable flock of birds."

"Some of the fuel used in cookstoves and box stoves was cut to length from trees partly burned in prairie fires. In a certain log shack in an outlying district the husband had just died and his remains were lying in a rough-pine coffin. The widow, not pleased with the position of the corpse, poked through the wood-box until she found a well blackened log which she proceeded to place under the head of the late lamented spouse."

Dr. Higbee's third career began in 1919 when the family moved to Toronto. Her brother, Dr. George H. Carveth had been one of the founders of the Western Hospital and Dr. Higbee joined the staff as an anesthetist. She retired from the Western in 1929 at the age of 65 but she was not yet ready to retire from medicine and practiced in Newcastle until 1939.

Special guest at the 60th Anniversary of the Toronto Western Hospital's founding was Dr. Annie Carveth Higbee who at 92 years of age was the oldest surviving staff surgeon of the hospital and oldest woman graduate doctor in Canada.

Dr. Annie C. Higbee celebrated her 100th Birthday at Halton Centennial Manor in Milton, Ontario on October 11th, 1964. She was the oldest woman Doctor in Canada and received congratulations from Queen Elizabeth, among many others.

Prof. Chas. E. Higbee died on Nov. 13th, 1934 aged 76 and Dr. Higbee passed away on April 25th, 1965 at the age of 100 years and six months. Son Jack died on Oct. 4th, 1975 at 77 years of age. Surviving is his wife Helen, daughter Mary and her family of two girls, Christina and Cathy, all living in Burlington, Ontario.

THE CLARENCE HOWE FAMILY STORY

Coming from south west of Saskatoon, Sask. in the fall of 1951, we lived on the John Pollock place. Our only child, June, went to the Somme school. Murray joined our family in 1953, and when he was a month old we moved to the Clarence Boyer farm. There Carol was born in 1956. In the fall of 1958 we moved to the Beaverlodge area, where I still farm.

June finished her high school in Beaverlodge, took a business course in Grande Prairie and is working for a chartered accountant firm in Calgary.

Murray took his schooling in Beaverlodge, one year of college in Grande Prairie, and is at present a technician at the Research Station. He also farms. Carol took her schooling in Beaverlodge, and is now in her third year of Education, in U. of A. in Edmonton. Amy, my wife, has taught in Beaverlodge Elementary School for the past fifteen years.

THE DIDRIK NICOLI JENSEN FAMILY — by Dina Jensen Goff

On December 19, 1877 my father, Didrik Nicoli Jensen was born in Bergen, Norway.

All young men in Norway had to put in time at Service and my father chose the Navy. At the age of 21 years he had put in his time at sea as a sailor and he left Norway and came to America. He landed at New York and from there on he travelled to Minnesota.



Mrs. Jensen and family.



Mrs. Jensen sitting on porch with her dog.

He had a few amusing experiences on the way, not being able to speak the English language, but once he arrived in Minnesota he felt quite at home as many people from Norway had settled there. He worked on farms and at other work that he was capable of doing.

My mother, Hjertine Torgenson, was born in Tronheim, Norway, June 29, 1877. When she was 2 years old her parents decided to leave Norway for Minnesota. Here they raised their family of eight.

They were all confirmed in the Lutheran Faith. Mother was confirmed September 11, 1892. Her late Halvor Bonning of Valhalla was mother's Sunday school teacher.

In Minnesota, my father met my fair mother. They were married in 1898 and decided to leave Minnesota and boarded a boat for Norway. There my two older brothers, Sigvald and Gustav, were born. Gustav developed bronchial trouble in the damp climate and they moved back to Minnesta. That is where I came into the family.

I was still a baby when Dad left Minnesota to go farming in North Dakota. And that is where my brother, Marvin, was born, November 26, 1906. It was a very cold and stormy winter. The storms were so severe the farmers couldn't go to town to buy coal and wood. They had to burn flax straw to keep from freezing to death.

Dad followed a guide line from the house to the barn so as not to get lost.

My sisters, Myrtle and Mildred (twins) were also born in North Dakota. They were so much alike Mother had to pin a blue ribbon on one and a pink ribbon on the other so as not to get them mixed up.

The year of 1911 Dad decided to explore Canada and in 1912 he moved his family and all his worldly possessions to southern Saskatchewan, 36 miles north of Maple Creek.

Our first home was very small and we were a family of eight but we were happy in our new land.

By the time I was 8 years old a school had been built and our education began.

Southern Saskatchewan was a very dry area but July 1915 we had a cloud burst and a slough down the hill from the house filled up with water and Dad went swimming. He was a very good swimmer and Myrtle and Mildred sat on his back.

July 1918 my sister, Geraldine was born and that fall I lost my older brothers, Sigvald and Gustav, with the Spanish Influenza. It was a sad year for all of us.

The spring of 1929 Dad got the desire to see the Peace River country. He left Fox Valley, Saskatchewan and settled for a farm east of Grande Prairie in the Glen Leslie area. He came back to Fox Valley and loaded three cars with machinery, stock and household good and was away to the Peace River country. He and my brother Marvin and my cousin, George Hansen were a week getting to Grande Prairie by rail. After unloading the horses and cattle my sisters, Geraldine and Myrtle drove them out to the farm on horseback. I was Assistant Postmistress at Fox Valley at that time and I liked my work and the people I was assoiciated with and I did not leave until later. I arrived in Grande Prairie in time to spend Christmas with the family at Glen Leslie.

We have all lived in the Grande Prairie area since 1929 and have seen many changes and in spite of some very cold winters we all like the country and I don't think any of us will be moving again.

My father passed away August 30, 1947 at the age of 69 and mother lived to be the good old age of 93. She passed away June 11, 1971.

HERMAN LANE KIMBLE

Herman Lane Kimble was born in 1921 in the home of his parents, Sylvira and Herman Kimble. He was raised in the Crystal Creek district and attended Crystal Creek School. In 1943, he married Louise Robideau, daughter of Edwin and Florence Robideau, and they settled in the Glen Leslie area or what is known as the old Tony Brennon farm (NE. 3-72-46). They raised six children — Albert, Melvin, Donna, David, Dianne and Carol. The older children attended Somme School until 1956 when they were transferred to Harry Balfour School in Grande Prairie. They were

later joined there by the younger children and went on to attend Grande Prairie Composite High School.

Albert has four children — Annette, Danny, Roddy and Tanya and is married to Carol Olestone. They live in Lake Louise, Alberta. The others all live in the Grande Prairie area. Donna married Sam Kloberdanz of Grande Prairie and they have four children — Greg, Karry, Henry and Scott. David married Sharon Meier of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and they have one daughter, Becky. Dianne married Garry Wilson of Bezanson and they have two children — Rhonda and Wyatt. Carol married Neil Murphy of Wembley and they have three children — Derrick, Shauna and Michael.

THE KIMMERLY FAMILY

James (old Jim) settled on the N.E.¼ Sec. 22-71-4 W6 in 1915. They had three children, James (young Jim) Clifford and Frances (Frankie). Young Jim's two daughter, Violet and Alice lived with them. They were real pioneers. They ran a stopping place on the Edson trail. Old Jim operated the ferry at Moody's Crossing and at Bezanson townsite for many years. Young Jim trapped on the Simonette in the early years, and in other places in later years. He worked as a forest ranger for many years. He was well versed on the forested area south of Grande Prairie when it was in its natural state. He also operated the Grovedale ferry for some years up until the first bridge was built on the Wapiti.

In his younger years Young Jim was renowned for his ability to walk fast. He was known to have walked from their home to Grande Prairie, a distance of ten miles, in one hour and forty-five minutes. Clifford and Frankie were quite musical and provided the music for many dances.

Violet and Alice attended the Somme and Crystal Creek schools.

Old Jim passed away in 1932 and Mrs. Kimmerly, Clifford and Frankie moved to Grande Prairie soon after. Mrs. Kimmerly passed away at 76 years in 1942. Mr. and Mrs. Kimmerly are both buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery.

RINEHART LADWIG

Rhinehart August Ladwig was born in Minnesota, U.S.A. on February 19, 1895. He was the third child and second son in a family of four.

The Peace Country came into view in 1913 and by July of that same year, he had filed his claim on S.W. 26-71-4-W6. This was the beginning, at 18 years of age, of a life of many adventures for Dad. I am told that keeping body and soul together that first winter came via a job at a sawmill. The following summer he worked as a ferry man. He also worked as a farm hand from time to time. Homesteading came to a halt as a result of World War One in which he enlisted. At the end of the war, Dad returned to this area, bought more land and eventually settled on S.E. 27-71-4-W6.

A few years later he was married to Mabel Helen Knight, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Knight. On December 19, 1928, their first son was born. The joy of having wee feet pattering about the home was rather brief, for at the tender age of five Maurice passed away. Although it was hard for both parents, I am told that mother especially was heart broken.



Rinehart Ladwig and Nellie Knight at Beaverlodge Experimental Station, 1927.

In the next few years three more children were born to mother and dad Ladwig. Arnold, April 25, 1936; Doris, December 31, 1937; Keith, July 3, 1929.

Dad was a person who earned and deserved the title "Head of the House", above whom there was no court of appeal. Arnold vividly remembers a spanking he received when quite young, for "sassing mother", he says. Although he was strict, dad is also remembered by his friends, family, and neighbors as a very kind and patient man. His door was always open to those in need of a friend. One such person was Josiah Smith, who appeared at their home once or twice a week, sometimes staying overnight. Always he was warmly welcomed and many were the favors bestowed on him.

In 1950 this young family again faced a hard time when death claimed their mother. For some time before her death, and for about a year afterwards, the family depended heavily on hired help for the home.

On November 12, 1951, Sylvira Kimble, widowed two years previously, became Mrs. Rinehart Ladwig. She did a fine job of helping to raise the children during those difficult teenage years. We all love her very much, and she is the only "Grandma Ladwig" Dad's grandchildren know.

Dad continued active farming with Arnold and Keith until 1961. At this point he sold the farm to them and occupied his first spring after retirement by building a boat. He and mother had many good fishing trips with it.



Arnold Ladwig family.

The folks lived at the farm until June, 1956. This is when Arnold and I, Anna were married and moved into the house. In the last few years we have been redecorating our home. It has been a real pleasure working with a place that has so much "personality". Dad built it well (in 1942) and we are looking forward to many more happy years here. We have three boys. Mark is ten years, Allan is eight years, and Corrie is seven years.

Although Dad inherited seventeen grandchildren when he married Mrs. Kimble (and another ten afterwards) Mark was the first of his very own grandchildren.

Keith was married to Margaret McDonald on November 5, 1965. So that fall Dad was on hand to supervise the building of a new house for them on S.W. 27-71-4-W6. They moved into their house in February 1966. They have two children. Karen is nine years and Dean is six. Their interests include camping in summer and skidooing in winter.

Doris was married to Roger Staszko in June 1968. They are living in Calgary and have two children. Marlowe is seven years and Averyl is four years. Both youngsters are busy with their skating lessons.

After the folks moved to Grande Prairie in June 1965, a workshop was added to their property. Here dad could pursue his hobby of carpentry which he enjoyed so very much. Some of the toys which he made for his children are still being enjoyed by his grandchildren some forty years later. Dad had served his community well in various ways before his retirement. He had spent several years as a school trustee, helped build the Glen Leslie Church, and served a number of years as the telephone line man — in the days before underground phones, remember? Besides the two houses Arnold and Keith occupy, he was also head carpenter for two additional homes in the community.

During the night of February 3, 1969, Dad quietly slipped away in his sleep. He is buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery.

LEWIS LEMAIRE

Lewis Lemaire returned after the war and filed on the S.W. 19-71-3 W6 in 1919. He was a widower with two daughters and two sons. The boys went to Somme school. He had the last team of oxen in the Glen Leslie district. He farmed with them until 1926. When he and the boys were crossing the Wapiti river in November, the raft got caught in the ice and Mr. Lemaire and Hector were drowned. Johnny got to shore and came home with the news. The rest of the family moved away right after the accident.

WALTER LEMKE

Walter arrived in the Grande Prairie district in 1928 and his father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. John Lemke, together with his sisters and brothers, from Rosthern Saskatchewan. He married Maude Nowlin in 1938. She came to the Grande Prairie district from southern Alberta in 1933 and taught at Twilight School for two years, 1933 to 1935, and at Somme School for three years, 1935 to 1938, and for a few months at a time during the war years. They lived on a farm three miles south of Somme School until 1947, and then moved to Grande Prairie. Walter took a course in barbering and had his own shop in the Park Hotel. Maude taught School at Montrose Elementary School from 1949 to 1966. In July of 1966 they moved to Blackfolds, Alberta, where Walter had a barber shop and pool room. They are now retired and live in Red Deer.

They have two children who took all their elementary and high schooling in the Grande Prairie area, except for one year Bryan spent at the Somme. Bryan attended the University of Alberta and received a bachelor degree in civil engineering. After graduation he worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway in Revelstoke and for the National Parks in Banff. He now lives in Richmond, B.C. and works for the Department of Indian Affairs. He married Marian Larder from Vancouver and they have two children, Jennifer and Philip. Brenda took a medical secretarial course in Edmonton and was medical secretary for the Medical Director of the University Hospital. In 1968 she married Duane Bohne from Lethbridge. They have two children, David and Heather. They live in Sherwood Park.

NORMAN LESLIE STORY — by Gladys Leslie

In the fall of 1912, a party of 7 came in over the Edson Trail in 13 days with a team of horses and a wagon.

The party consisted of Lew. Fowler, Charlie Dunlop, Ross Wales, Thomas Leslie and his 3 sons — Norman, Edward and Bruce. In 1913 a second trip was made via Grouard and Sturgeon Lake. This party included, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Leslie, Mr. and Mrs. Alec Milner of Madoc, Ont. Mrs. McKinley of Spruce Grove, Alta. and Norman Leslie. The Leslie family settled in the area to be known later as the Glen Leslie district. In 1914 the first post office was opened in Mrs. Thomas Leslie's residence with Mr. Leslie as postmaster.



Norman, Ed, Thomas Leslie.

In 1915, Norman Leslie enlisted; He served overseas, was wounded during that service and returned to the Glen Leslie district a little more than 3 years later. When Norman returned in the spring of 1919, he got a ride to the Glen Leslie corner with Mr. Morrison, his son Hector and the Bryenton family —, who had arrived on the same train. He then waded through mud and water to the home of his parents about a mile south. After Mr. and Mrs. Leslie returned to Ontario in 1921, Norman was the postmaster until the Glen Leslie store opened. He spent a year or so as land assessor for the area north of Glen Leslie and also farmed.

On Jan. 1st, 1923 Norman was married to Gladys Bryenton, whom he had met on his return from overseas and the subsequent wagon ride to Glen Leslie. Rev. A. S. Forbes performed the ceremony in the Bryenton home. Miss Marion Morrison was bridesmaid and Mr. Bert Berry was best man. The couple resided at Glen Leslie until 1930 when they moved to Dimsdale to operate a store and post office. They had 2 children — Jean, now Mrs. E. Rooney of Grande Prairie and Keith now of Lethbridge, Alta.

Gladys and Norman Leslie retired to Grande Prairie in 1968. Norman died on May 27, 1972 in his 84th year. Gladys continues to live in Grande Prairie, Alta.

MR. AND MRS. THOMAS LESLIE — by Dorothy Leslie 1976

Thomas Leslie married Margaret Garrett on Dec. 28, 1887 and they settled on a farm in Roslin, Ontario, where 3 children were born; Norman (Dec. 12, 1888), Edward (April 10, 1890), and Bruce (Mar. 10, 1893). Later they moved to a farm at Queensboro, Ont., about 125 miles east of Toronto. When Ed was 16, he left home and went to work for an uncle, who owned a store in Coldwater, Ont. At 19 years of age, he decided to go west, and settled in Edmonton, Alta., boarding with Grandma Moon and became friends with the Moon boys.



Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Leslie.



Bruce and Carrie Leslie.

In the fall of 1912 Ross Wales, Norman Moon, Charles Dunlop, Lou Fowler, Ed, Norman and Bruce Leslie, and the Leslie boys' father Thomas, came over the Edson trail to Bezanson and filed on homesteads in the Glen Leslie and Bezanson districts.

In Dec., Norman Leslie went back to Edmonton for a load of freight and returned in Feb. 1913 accompanied by Bob, Fred, Charles and Grandma Moon, also Gladys Moon, Annie Wales, Dan and Mayme Minchin, Archie (nicknamed "Bub") and Archie (Dan Minchin's father). They had hired a caboose and a man to drive it in Edmonton, for the trip, and in this the ladies slept and cooked.

Mrs. Thomas Leslie arrived in the fall of 1913. The next few years were busy ones, as log houses and barns were built on the homesteads. In 1915 Norman Leslie joined the armed forces and was overseas until April 1919.

In the early days the Leslie home was the hub of the Glen Leslie district. Here in their home; was the first post office, and the first Church Services held at Glen Leslie. It was also a stopping place for travellers. In 1918, during the flu epidemic, Mrs. Leslie Sr. looked after the sick in her neighbourhood, bring several of them right into her home. They also boarded the first school teachers in the district.

In 1916 Bruce went back to Ontario, and in 1917 he married Carrie Sager, whom he had gone to school with, and came back to Glen Leslie with his bride. Norman Leslie, after his return from the war (W.W.I), met and married Gladys Bryenton in 1923. Ed. married Dorothy Morrison in 1921.

In Feb., 1920 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Leslie went back to Ontario, back to the old farm in Queensboro. Thomas Leslie died there in 1941, age 83 years, and Mrs. Margaret Leslie died in 1960, age 96 years.

MR. AND MRS. EDWARD LESLIE — written by Dorothy Leslie 1976

Edward Leslie was born in Roslin, Ontario in 1890. He went to school there and in Queensboro, Ont. At 16 years of age he went to work in his uncle's store in Coldwater, Ont. Along with many others he began to feel the urge to go west, and in 1909 arrived in Edmonton, where he found room and board with Grandma Moon. She was a widow with a large family, and soon the young people became interested in the homestead land that was being thrown open in the Peace River Country. When a railway line had been surveyed into the country a party was formed, and in the fall of 1912 they decided to go north. Ed had written to his parents in Queensboro glowing accounts of the new land, and his father and two brothers, Norman and Bruce came to Edmonton to join the party. Along with Norman Moon, Lou Fowler, Charlie Dunlop and Ross Wales they came over the Edson trail to Bezanson, and filed on homesteads in the Glen Leslie and Bezanson districts. Ed made 6 trips in all, over the Edson Trail. He helped his parents build their log house and barns, and stayed with them until they left to go back to Ontario in 1920.

In 1921 he married Dorothy Morrison. They had 4 children; Kenneth (born Jan. 29, 1927), Bill (born April 26, 1929), Marion (born Mar. 31, 1933), Tom (born Feb. 12, 1935).

We had rented Lou Fowler's homestead and lived on it until 1927. My father, Kenneth Morrison had built a store on the corner in 1921, and my Aunt, Mrs. Minnie Bryenton, ran the store and the post office.

I taught at the Glen Leslie school, which was held in the church log building, built in 1915 with volunteer labor, and only one hired carpenter, Mr. Alfred Olson, who received $4.00 a day for his services. The logs were hauled from the bush, and donated. The cost of the church, in cash, was a little over $100.00.

In 1927 we left the farm for a year, and Ed. went to work in my father's "Morrison Store" in Grande Prairie. When Mrs. Bryenton left the Glen Leslie store in 1928, we moved back there into the store building. Ed. farmed and helped me in the store, until 1945, when we sold the land and the store to Jack Wales.

Ed. had bought the B.A. Oil warehouse in Grande Prairie and he operated the bulk oil plant until 1948, when he died. Our oldest son, Kenneth was attending University at the time, so Bill took over and managed the oil plant until 1952. Then we bought a store on the west side of Grande Prairie and operated it until 1970.

My son, Kenneth, married Rosalie McHaffie in 1951. They had 5 children. He later married Jo Anne Burrows. He is a dentist and lives in Victoria, B.C. Marion, my daughter, married Don Podritski in 1953 and lives in Nanaimo, B.C. Tom married Marion Sheilds in 1954. Bill married Jean Trout in 1955.

Bill and Tom and their families all live in Grande Prairie, Alta.



Dorothy Leslie and Family.

BENNY LIGHTFOOT

I was born at Spirit River in 1930 and started school at the Spirit Valley School. In 1942, my family moved



Benny Lightfoot and Don Hawkes, Roman standing, 1955 at Teepee Creek sports.

to Grande Prairie and my school years continued there.

I started jockeying at about the age of fourteen years for Ewart Ellis of Grande Prairie. Mr. Ellis then owned and operated the livery barn on the site of today's Lewis Lincoln Mercury Dealership.

When I was not riding horses, I was looking after and feeding cattle for Billy Salmond. His land was located just north of the town (where the Silver Crest Lodge is now). A few of his buildings still stand on this site.

Mr. Salmond had lease land south of Grande Prairie on the Smoky River where he pastured his cattle during the summer. In the spring, we drove these cattle right down 100 Street or Clairmont Road south past the Post Office, Bird's Store and Joe's Coffee Shop and on south through town. We forded the Wapiti River at the site of the North Canadian Forest Industries bridge and moved on to the lease. It was not uncommon to see the cattle wandering north through town, coming home for the winter by themselves, just reversing the route they had travelled in the spring.

In 1949, I started jockeying outside of the Peace area in the "B" Circuit of central and southern Alberta and into Montana. I was still riding for Mr. Ellis and we travelled with his well known thoroughbreds "Miss Havoc", "Bobby Moore" and "Safanad". We were considered no threat to anyone and were referred to as "those fellas from the sticks up north." When we hit Millarville, the first thing we did was win the Millarville Derby with "Miss Havoc". This was a one day event and we left with three first and two second prizes with the three horses. They all knew we had been there when the day was over and the rest of the season was good for us as well.

I later bought "Miss Havoc" and "Bobby Moore" and raced them in the Roman Standings, the Chariots and the Free-for-alls in the Peace Country Circuit. We took in such places as Grande Prairie, Teepee Creek, Fort St. John and High Prairie.

While I was with Ewart Ellis, he also raced "Gold Saffron" and "Prairie Gold". Racing fans will probably remember when, as a two year old, "Prairie Gold" was hurt at Teepee Creek when she ran wide and hit the fence on the first turn. She did not run again until she was a five year old. In 1955, Mr. Ellis passed away and I purchased these two horses from his family. I ran them both that summer and the next spring, "Prairie's Pluck" was born to "Prairie Gold". She was a good horse and ran well as both a two year old and a three year old, but, the spring she was four, she was badly cut up in a barbed fence and ran only once after that. The last year I was really involved in flat racing, I still had "Gold Saffron" winning for me.

It was sometime during these racing years that I first came to the Glen Leslie area. This was as part of a threshing crew for Art Patterson. In the crew was a group of us all about the same age including Don Olsen, Doug and Des Stark, Hans Ruch and Leslie Burrows. I continued to work in the area until I moved to my present farm in 1956. This land was formerly owned by Nels Myers. During this time, I also helped with the preparations for and competed in the Bezanson Stampede, as well as, the cleaning up of the grounds.

The past eight or nine years, besides farming, I have been involved in the breeding and raising of fast racing ponies. These ponies are Quarter Horse and Welsh cross ponies. I am using them in the Pony Chariot and Pony Chuckwagon events.

JOHN McKENZIE

John McKenzie filed on the S.E. 8-71-3 W6 in 1914. After the war he filed on a soldiers grant on the S.W. 21-71-3 W6 in 1919. In 1920 he built a store on the John Angus land near Grandma Moon's Corner. In 1923 he left and the store building was sold and moved a mile west to Arnold Christie's land.

MURDOCK McKINLEY

Murdock McKinley came over the Edson trail with his sister and brother-in-law, Dan Minchin. He filed on the N.W. 32-71-3 W6, 18/3/1913. Murd was a very happy-go-lucky fellow, everything was O.K. with him. He worked for different farmers in the district and later moved to Fort St. John and was foreman on Gordon Moore's ranch. He is now retired and lives in Dawson Creek.

PETER McPHEE

Peter McPhee was a railroad contractor. The C.N.R. railway survey came up the Muskeg creek valley by Peter Moon's homestead. Peter thought that there would be a townsite where the railroad reached level ground. He had six people, besides himself, buy Indian scrips on the east and west of the school section 29-71-3 W6. They received title right away without living on the land. The railroad never arrived so the expected town was never built.



Robert McPhee.

ROBERT NEIL McPHEE AND FAMILY — by Mildred McPhee

Robert Neil McPhee, my husband was the eldest son of a family of four girls and two boys. He was born to Peter and Nellie McPhee in Edmonton on November 19, 1910. He spent his early years with his family on a farm at Winterburn, Alberta. His father's source of income came mainly from logging, so Bob heard many interesting stories as a young boy. Consequently his interest in logging developed, but he showed even greater interest in the horses used in the bush work. In 1923 when his father passed away he left the Winterburn school to go to work in the Edmonton vicinity.

Meanwhile a desire to leave Edmonton grew as he heard of the opportunities in the Peace River country. In 1929 he left Edmonton and came to stay with his Aunt Elizabeth (his father's sister), better known to most as Grandma Moon. He liked the area so well he decided to stay, working mainly for his cousins, Peter, Charlie and Alfred Moon. He spent most of his younger years working in the bush, which he enjoyed.

Much of his time was spent on his horse, Tonie, his pride and joy.

Entertainment then was mainly dances in the old log hall, known as Bezanson Club Hall.

About this time someone very important entered into his life. In 1936 Bob and I were married in the McDougall United Church in Edmonton. Working out and not having a home of his own was not the life for him. He rented Arnold Christie's farm and raised cattle, horses and pigs. It was while we were there that Bonnie, Arlene and Peter were born. After a few years he decided to better himself and rented the farm of Charlie Weaver. After 3 years renting he decided this was the opportunity he had been looking for, and bought the farm in partnership with George Hansen. It was while we were there that our youngest son, Terry was born.

By this time his cattle herd had grown and many a time he supplied cattle for the Bezanson Stampede. The rounding up of the cattle was a stampede of its own and many a good time was had. He was also on the hall board and directed the stampede.

One day while on his way to town he spotted a poster tacked on a post with horse shoe nails. It read, $500.00 Reward, Wanted Dead or Alive. On taking a close look at it he discovered it was a picture of himself. While pondering this mischief his mind responded. Benny Lightfoot was the only one who had that brand of nails so that cleared the issue up.

Happy years were spent raising our family, even though times were hard. Bob drove school bus for nine years. There were few gravelled roads at that time so had many a hard trip although he enjoyed it all.

It wasn't long until our family, that we had enjoyed so much, were on their own.

On July 6, 1976 after a short illness Bob passed away at the farm he loved so well.

ALEXANDER MILNER

Alexander Milner came in 1913 and filed on the S.E. 5-72-3 W6. Before coming he was a store keeper in Ont. He proved up and returned to Ont. The land was sold to Alfred Olson.

THE ALFRED MOON FAMILY

I came to the Peace River Country in 1913 with other members of my family and that same year, at the age of seventeen, filed on my homestead quarter, in what would later be known as the Glen Leslie District. However it was not until the next year that the first sod was turned and breaking begun.

During the winter I worked at the Cook and Boyd sawmill, along with many other settlers. In 1916, Johnny Garrett, Bub Minchin and I built a raft and went down the Smoky to Watino, going from there, on foot, across to the end of the steel, north of High Prairie. We caught the train there and went to the Saskatchewan wheat fields to work at the harvest. I spent that winter at my Uncle Hugh McPhee's farm in Spruce Grove before returning to my homestead in time for the next summer season.



Alf Moon family.

The following fall, Nat Hunter, Merd McKinley, my brother Charlie and I repeated the trip, by raft, down the river and across by land to catch the train out again, this time to the harvest fields of Southern Alberta. That winter, I returned home and worked again at the Boyd-Cook sawmill on the Wapiti. In the spring, Stan Hermizon and I attempted to raft lumber which could be used to build a house down river to a landing on the Smoky. However with the high flood waters, our would-be home was swamped and we were forced to save ourselves and let the logs go. We managed to get to the bank but unfortunately it was the other side from where we had started. To get back to camp, the mouth of Big Mountain creek, high with icy cold water, had to be crossed. Two logs tied together solved the problem and we crossed — cold and wet and worked our way back about five miles until we were directly across river from the mill. We attracted the attention of Rheinhart Ladwig and he returned us, by boat, to the camp and the welcome warmth of the bunkhouse. No later attempt was made to raft logs,

but a home was built that summer for Grandma on the land which is now owned by her grandson, Grant Moon.

Nat Hunter and myself, having enlisted in the army, left that spring of 1918 for England and did not return until the fall of 1919.

Upon return, I rented the adjoining half section from Dan Minchin and spent the summer farming and the winters at Buffalo Lakes filling contracts for railroad ties. In November, 1924, Myrtle Wales and I were married at Forbes manse which was about one mile outside of Grande Prairie, at that time. We lived at the house that had been built earlier on Grandma's place until the following fall when we moved to the one I had ready on the Dan Minchin land. We both spent the winter of 1926-27 at Buffalo Lakes, with Myrtle cooking for the men I had hired to take out ties.

This was to be my last winter in the logging camps for some time. The next fourteen years were spent on the farm. I bought the Minchin half, which I had been farming, adjoining my homestead. During these years our four children were born and we were in, what is now referred to, as the depression years.

In 1939 I went back to the logging work I so much enjoyed, at Edson subcontracting ties and lumber, for my brother Bob. Some of the men from here went out to work at Edson also. With the war however, came a shortage of men and German prisoners were brought in to work. At my camp, there were about fifty prisoners for three winters, and they were good workers and had their own cooks.

During the winters, Myrtle stayed on the farm with the children, and cared for the livestock. The last winter that I spent at Edson, 1945-46, Myrtle and the two youngest, Neil and Jean, joined me. Jim stayed in Grande Prairie to go to high school and Alice, our eldest, had joined the army previously.

After we returned home in the spring and the crops were in, Jack Mitchell, my brother-in-law, and myself took a timber permit north of Debolt where we logged for two years before selling to my brother, Pete and his son Bill.

The following years were spent on the farm. We moved from the Minchin quarter to my homestead quarter where we built our new home. My youngest son Neil, after taking a course at Fairview Agriculture School, remained on the farm with us. Jim completed high school and then worked in the tire business, first in Grande Prairie for Jack Crummy, and then for Firestone for seventeen years in different parts of Alberta. He now owns a tire shop in Edmonton, residing in Sherwood Park, with his wife Marion (Burgess) formerly from Beaverlodge, and their four sons.

Alice, after her army service, took a Nursing Aide course and went to work at Taber, Alberta, where she met and married Art Valgardson. They have three sons who live at Taber and one daughter who lives in Grande Prairie.

Jean, our youngest, also completed her high school in Grande Prairie and married Brian Boyd, living on a farm west of us in the Crystal Creek district, with four sons and two daughters.

In 1961 I spent one more winter in the bush south of Grande Prairie at the Ross Davis Lumber camp with my son-in-law Brian, who was working there with his cousin Marshall. The logging camps that were so much a part of the farmers livelihood and winters are now gone, being replaced by the centralization that has taken place.

Neil was married in 1974 to Gayle (Tink) formerly from Clairmont, and they live on the farm with their two children, David and Janice. That same year Myrtle and I had our 50th wedding anniversary and were fortunate to have all our children and grandchildren, which numbered 24, there with us. There was also our best man Jack Lowe and honorary bridesmaid, Betty Moon (Fred's wife) there to celebrate with us and other relatives, as well as friends and neighbors, many of whom are the sons and daughters of other pioneers who came to the Peace River Country.

In December, the month following our Golden Wedding Anniversary, Myrtle and I left the farm and moved to Grande Prairie, where we can still enjoy visiting with our friends, neighbors and family as well as going back to the farm to visit where we lived so many years. This Peace River Country was indeed "our land of the future", as they said when we first came.

THE MOON FAMILY

Elizabeth Moon came to the Bezanson area in 1913 with her family. She took a great interest in the new community and its people and was affectionately known as Grandma Moon by her many friends as well as her family.

In the early 1890s Grandma's parents, sister and brothers left Ontario and pioneered in the Spruce Grove area West of Edmonton. They had sent back glowing reports of the country. Grandma now found herself with a large family to raise alone and it was decided that all except the eldest, May who was in training for a nurse, would make the move to Edmonton.

The farm was sold keeping only the house and a few acres just in case a return had to be made. In May 1905 the family boarded a colonist car at Coldwater and the trip West on the C.P.R. began. After a short stop in Winnipeg they crossed the prairies and to Calgary where a day's wait was made for the train to Edmonton. Calgary land developers tried to convince Grandma that to go North to Edmonton would be a great mistake. They said that country would never be any good except for hunting and some trapping. If she wanted her sons to be trappers fine but she should not subject her daughters to that wilderness.

North they came and were met by Uncle Hugh McPhee at the Southside station. He had a team and wagon and through the swamps which are now West Edmonton they went to the McPhee farm South of Spruce Grove. That fall the younger children were enrolled in the Spruce Grove school while Norman and Pete found work in Uncle Pete McPhee's lumber camp.

In March of 1906 Grandma started a boarding house in a large 3 story house on the corner of Edmonton's Jasper Ave. and 106 St. where Healy Motors operate today. The pavement had not reached that far out yet

nor had water and sewer services. The children were sent to MacKay Ave. school and Annie helped her Mother with the boarding house. It was from this school in 1907 that all the children were taken down to view the laying of the corner stone for Alberta's legislative building. Old Fort Edmonton was still there and was a favorite spot for boys to investigate.

Grandma found that running a boarding house without running water just too big a job and a new one was found on Belimy Ave. and 96 St. in 1907. The years to 1911 passed quickly with the boys getting work as they grew older and soon they became interested in the Peace River Country.

Uncle Pete McPhee and his partner Harry Bell were contractors for the railway building grades. They were told by engineers that a divisional point would be made at the top of the hill where the Wapiti and Smokey Rivers joined. The railway was taking this route to the coast and anyone having land in that area would be in an excellent position to develop a townsite. With this in mind plans were made for the family to file on land as soon as possible.

In January of 1912 Pete McPhee, six Indians with their native Indian scrips, Pete Moon, and Dan Minchin went via the Edson Trail to Grande Prairie to file on land near the proposed townsite. Some of that land is in the Moon family today. Pete McPhee filed on six quarters of Indian Scrip for himself and his partners. Pete Moon filed for himself, Grandma Moon, and brothers Bob and Norman. Dan Minchin filed on two quarters of South African Scrip for his father and himself. They immediately returned to Edmonton over the Edson Trail without seeing the land.

In late July of 1912 brothers Bob, Pete and Norman Moon along with Dan Minchin and his father drove with horses and wagons via Lesser Slave Lake to Grande Prairie. The empty wagons were taken around the North side of Lesser Slave while freight was loaded on a boat and shipped to Grouard. Here it was reloaded and continued on to Peace River, Dunvegan and to Bezanson. In coming to the land a wrong turn was made and the party ended up at the Argonaut Mill on the Wapiti at the mouth of Muskeg Creek. A road had to be cut through the creek and soon the group was at the site. Two cabins were built, one on Grandma Moon's quarter and one Mr. Minchin Sr's quarter. During their stay Ross Wales and Ed Leslie joined them after coming in the Edson Trail from Edmonton. Ross was looking for good farm land and filed on land four miles to the West. Ed Leslie also filed on adjoining land. Shortly before the men returned to Edmonton a ground fire swept through the country burning much of the small brush but fortunately the cabins and wagons were able to be saved.

Grandma Moon had been busy during this time. She was still active with a boarding house but now had a new one on Stony Plain Road and 122 Street. The Ontario property had been sold. The family was growing with both Alfred and Bob now on their own. Alfred was driving mail stage to Athabaska via Gibbons. In the spring of 1912 Norman had married Gladys Kennedy. On Christmas Day of that year Ross Wales and Annie Moon were married in Grandma Moon's new home.

The family move to Bezanson took place in February of 1913. Grandma was not going to stay in Edmonton and have her family pioneer in the North. At the age of 49 she closed her boarding house and started a new life in the Peace River country. The preparation was made by having a caboose built on one of the flat racks with the others being used to haul household effects and equipment. Fold down beds were made for the women in the party, Grandma, Annie Wales, Gladys Moon, and Mamie (Dan) Minchin. The men, Ross Wales, Dan Minchin, and Norman Moon drove the sleighs and slept at the stopping places along the route. Fred Moon was only ten years old and went by train to Edson and then with the group North. The trip took two weeks and from reports was quite an experience for the women — sleeping in the caboose, washing in the snow, peeling frozen vegetables covered with ice, and holding pots on the stove as the caboose jolted and swayed while cooking meals.

The cabins were waiting for them and all made do while additional cabins were built on the Wales homestead. Ross was joined later by his father and sisters Myrtle and Agnes from Ontario. A more permanent house was built for the Moons at the site of the present Grant Moon home. The first cabins built had sod roofs so water seeped through for days after it had rained. Grandma took all of the pioneering in her usual tolerant cheerful way and soon found that she was needed to act as midwife for not only her own family but for the other settler women as well. The only doctor in the area was Dr. Higbee who had a vast area to cover by horse so Grandma's services filled a great need. In July of 1913 her first grandson was born to Norman and Gladys and of course she was in attendance. That same year a daughter was born to Dan and Mamie Minchin and a son to Ross and Annie Wales.

The spring of 1913 saw some land broken and the first seeding was done by hand. The other members of the family, Bob, Charle, Hilda and Alfred joined the group in 1913. The men made many trips to Edmonton and back sometimes driving or riding horses but often walking which was said to be the best way. In May of 1913 Norman and Alf were bringing in a load of oats and joined up with a very aloof ill tempered chap. The route was the Edson trail and one of the fellows horses lost a shoe. In order to find it in the mud puddle he took off his shoes and started walking back and forth through the mud hoping his bare feet would touch it. The next party came along and asked him what he was doing. He gave them a very gruff and evasive answer. When they came to Alf and Norman they told of the chaps actions and upon finding out that he was with them offered to get help as they were certain he was mental.

In the fall of 1914 Canada was at war and a deep economic depression was on. Word came from Harry Bell that the railroad would not be built and any hope for a townsite was over. The settlement was growing and the family liked the country so no thought was given to leaving even if they could have done so.

Grandma went to work as a cook in the Grande Prairie hospital as money was needed. The Edmonton house was sold for very little but life was still good if hard. Another son, Bob married Jean Craig and they stayed for some years before moving to Edmonton

where Bob was in the lumber business for many years. Pete married Katherin Grant and raised his family on the quarter next to Grandma's.

Alfred joined the army and spent some time overseas before returning.

Grandma continued to live on the farm and she was very much the centre of things. She took a great interest in her growing family and her grandchildren must have felt her cookie can was bottomless. She was of the Baptist faith and always took an active part in church life whenever she could. Many services of many different denominations were held in her living room in the early days.

The family was once again joined with the Wales family when Alfred married Ross's sister Myrtle. They moved to their farm at Glen Leslie. Charlie married Pearl Bryenton and continued to have Grandma live with them on the home place. Hilda married a young man from New Brunswick by the name of Jack Mitchell. They lived for a time in the U.S. but came back to the Peace River area farming and working with the U.G.G. Fred married Betty Whillets who was teaching at Bezanson. They farmed in the district with Betty teaching for many years before moving to Grande Prairie. The eldest sister May visited Grandma many times in later years after her husband Jack Scott had passed on.

The years passed and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren had come to love and respect her. In January of 1945 Elizabeth Moon passed away. She was buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery where many pioneers of East End lie.

FRED MOON

Fred Moon was only ten years old when he first came to the Peace River Country. He was born to Rawling and Elizabeth Moon on the family farm at Moonstone, Ontario on October 2nd, 1902. In 1905 shortly after his father's death, Mrs. Moon brought her family of nine west and settled in Edmonton. February 1913 saw them again on the move. This time travelling over the Edson Trail lured by A. M. Bezanson's dream that when the railway came through a big city would be built at the junction of the Smoky, Wapiti and Simonette Rivers. N.E. Sec. 17-71-2 W6.

The trip was made in two weeks. They travelled into the country in sub-zero weather with horses, sleighs with flat racks and a caboose on a flat rack. Fred walked or rode on horseback sleeping at night on a bed made up on a sewing machine in the caboose. When they reached Bezanson they settled in a sod roofed log cabin on his mother's homestead.

There was no school at this time in the community. Fred walked some distance through the bush to a kind neighbor who helped him with lessons. The next winter he was sent out to Edmonton to stay with his married sister, May Scott, and attend school. After a few months he returned to Bezanson. Later he was able to attend school in Bezanson and Grande Prairie.

As soon as he was old enough he filed on a homestead "across the creek" from his mother's land. This quarter did not prove too suitable for cultivation so later he purchased the N.W. 4-72-3 W6 in the Glen Leslie District.

Many winters were spent working in the lumber mills at Buffalo Lakes and along the Wapiti. Several winters were spent in the bush west of Edmonton at Niton. Later he travelled to Detroit, Michigan and worked there for a time. But the call of the north was strong and he soon returned.

On June 29, 1935 he married Elizabeth Willetts who had come from Edmonton to teach at Bezanson School in the fall of 1930. Fred and Betty settled on the farm at Glen Leslie. Crop failures forced the family to move to Moon's Mill at Crooked Creek from 1947 to 1952. Then they returned to the farm and lived there till ill health forced Fred to give up farming. The family moved to Grande Prairie in 1957. In 1966 Fred sold the farm to Harvey Weegar. Fred worked at Sargent Motors till his death in January 1971. His wife Betty who taught school for 27 years in and around Grande Prairie, retired in June 1972. She still makes her home in Grande Prairie.

Their four children have chosen to leave the Peace River Country. Arnold married Alice Haugli of La Glace. They now live in St. Albert, Alberta with their three children Michele, Kim and Ronald. Gerald married Joan Kelleher of Ottawa. With their two daughters Laurie Anne and Robin, they live in Ottawa. Alan married Geri Logie of Calgary. They now reside in Calgary. Helen makes her home in Vancouver.

NELS MEYERS AND FAMILY

Nels Meyers came from Norway to Manitoba with his brother in 1907. After working around Winnipeg for a couple years, Nels moved on to Vancouver. There he worked in tie and logging camps. Nels met up with Alfred Olson and Mac McLaughlin. Together they came to Edmonton; then over the Edson trail to Grande Prairie. In 1914 Mels filed on the S.E. Sec. 4-72-3 W6. McLaughlin on the N.E. Sec. 4-72-3 W6 and Olson across the road to the south.

Nels hewed the logs for the Glen Leslie church and worked as blacksmith for the Kleskun Lake Ranch Co. He sold his homestead to Richard Webb and started a blacksmith shop in Beaverlodge.

He married Alma Smyle of Pouce Coupe in 1923. In 1926 he bought John Mackenzie's quarter S.W. 21-71-3 W6 and moved his family to Glen Leslie. Mac McLaughlin had started a sawmill on the Wapiti and Nels became millwright. He also had a small lumber and shingle mill of his own at home. For many years he worked at different mills as millwright, sawer, plainerman, carpenter, blacksmith, and mechanic.

There were eight children born to the Meyers family, two boys and six girls, Florence, Carl, Edwin, Hazel, Anna, twins Ruth and Kitty, and Irene. The oldest boy died of pneumonia in 1927. They took their schooling at Somme school.

In 1954 they sold the farm and moved to Grande Prairie. Nels died at the age of 88 in 1973 and is buried beside his son in the Glen Leslie Cemetery. Mrs. Meyers lives in their house in Grande Prairie, Edwin farms at Goodwin and the girls are all married, living in Grande Prairie, B.C. and Berwyn.

BILL AND BETTY NELLIS — by Betty Nellis

There is nothing out of the ordinary to our story. Bill, the fourth child of Mr. and Mrs. Moose Nellis,

was born at Bezanson. He attended school at Lindsay and Grande Prairie. In 1911, he joined the Armed Forces and went overseas with the Airforce. (Goose squadron number 408).

On his return from overseas, we were married and bought the land, first homesteaded by Floyd Totten, in the Glen Leslie district.

We have three children. Stella Ann is married to Floyd Harding. They have two daughters, Sandra and Brenda, and live in Clairmont. Frank, our son, is married to the former Lois Glen, of Lousana, and lives in Clairmont also. Enid is married to Ken Biron. They have two sons, Alan and Rene, and live in Edson.

There is little more to add, except to say our life in the area has been good. With good friends and good neighbors, what more can you ask?

DOC PARKINSON

Doc Parkinson rode a bicycle over the Edson trail in 1914. He filed on N.E. Sec. 3-72-4 W6. He moved to Washington, U.S.A.

GUY PATTERSON STORY — by Mildred (Patterson) Parrish

In 1916 my father and mother, sister Minnie (born 1913) and I (Mildred born 1915) came to the Glen Leslie district in Alberta, Canada. Here he homesteaded (N.E. 3-72-3-W6). In 1918 flu hit the district and my mother died from it. Father took us 2 girls back to Osceola, Iowa in 1919 where a sister of mother's, Vina Lamb, kept us for the next 7 years.



Guy and Bertha Patterson, two girls Minnie and Mildred, 1915.

Dad came back to Glen Leslie and continued farming there, taking frequent trips back to Iowa to see us.

Minnie and I went to school in Garden Grove, Iowa until I was in grade 6, then we came back to Canada, that was in 1926. Every summer while we were in Iowa, my uncle Ernie Patterson came and got us and took us to his farm. He had a good orchard and he gave us a cherry tree to call our own.

My dad married Adda Arnett, Feb. 15, 1926, and later that month we came back up to Glen Leslie to live with them. Adda was born Nov. 19, 1885 at Clarke County, Iowa.

Grandpa Patterson and aunt Lela (Ernie Patterson's wife) and Walt Arnett all came with us. Uncle



L. to R. Minnie and Nemo Sackett, Guy, Adda and Rex Patterson. Meryle, Polly, Billie, Danny and Leslie Paterson, 1953.



Guy Patterson and his faithful watchdog.

Ernie had gone with the farm machinery and household goods by freight.

We lived on the Christie place (N.E. 29-71-3 W6), 1 mile south and 1 mile west of Rex Patterson's. Adda bought a quarter section of land ½ mile west of Uncle Rex's (Les Christie's used to live there and before that Tom Witherleys had homesteaded it) S.W. 4-72-3-W6. In the fall of 1927 we all moved there.

In July — 1928 a baby boy was born — "Meryle" (Buster). In 1932 Minnie married Nemo Sackett and went to live at Candle Lake, Sask. They adopted 2 children — Dale — 1943 and Anne — 1946.

I married Laurence Parrish Nov. 26, 1934. We have 4 children, Dale — 1936, Janet — 1938, Sylvia — 1940, and Helen — 1944.

Meryle married Mary Stark, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Stark of Glen Leslie, Oct. 24, 1951. They have 3 sons: Billie — 1952, Danny — 1954, and Leslie — 1956.

My dad died of a lengthy illness on August 6, 1958. Adda lived on in a small house in Meryle's yard until 1963 when she died. They are both buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery along with my own mother and my husband.

EARL PATTERSON

I was born in Grande Prairie, Alberta, in 1918 and lived in Glen Leslie area all my life. I'm the son of Otto Patterson who homesteaded in that area in 1914. I took my schooling in the Somme school and worked on my dad's farm.

In 1942 I married Charlotte Ruch, duughter of Mrs. Annie Ruch and the late Hans Ruch, from the Fitzimens area. Shortly after we were married I joined the army. I spent one year training in Canada. Then I went overseas, where I spent three years playing in the army band. I spent some time in Italy, Belgium and England.

We had one son, Wayne born before I went overseas. Our second son Robert was born while I was in Italy.

When I came back from overseas we bought our first farm in the Glen Leslie area. We lived on that for a number of years. I then went to work for the oil companies, so we moved to Grande Prairie. We did our farming from there. I worked with Johnson Testers drill stem testing and diamond coring for 11 years.

Our boys took their schooling in Grande Prairie. They are both married now. We have five grandchildren. Wayne married Paulette Martineau and Robert married Gwen Jones, from Grande Prairie. Wayne and Paulette have their own business, Spot Realty in Grande Prairie, Robert is maintenance electrician for Alberta Government Telephones.

I have had an active musical background, having my own dance band for 15 years.

In 1970 we sold our residence in Grande Prairie; moved back to the farm; built a new home; and bought more land. I'm still involved in the oil industry.

JAMES OTT PATTERSON FAMILY — by Arthur Patterson

My father, James Ott Patterson was born in Hannibal, Missouri, U.S.A. in 1885, resided in Oregon for 4 years in the early 1900, then moved to Everett, Washington. In 1909 he married Ruby Witherly.

In 1912 he built a sea worthy boat and named it, Halley, after Halley's comet that made its sojourn that year. Father worked in the shingle mills, where he was a shingle weaver and millwright.

However the cedar dust was a hazard to his health so seeking unadultered air, he ventured north to Canada, walking over the Edson Trail in July 1914 in search of a homestead. He filed on S.W. 5-72-3-W6th. The following summer the family, consisting of mother, dad and I came as far as Watino via rail. From there we came up the Smoky river by boat to Bezanson townsite. We were met by my uncle Tom Witherly with a yoke of oxen, namely Red and Old Blue.

I have amusing memories of Red and Old Blue. The occasion being, my uncle taking my grandmother, a devout, pious Baptist to church. They were driving west against a very strong wind when Old Red suddenly, with great effort decided to relieve himself with gusto. Grandma in her Sunday best was splattered, smeared from head to toe with predigested green grass. She missed church service that day. I presumed she was excused.

Dad, although he only had a grade 4 education, was a talented, excellent carpenter and blacksmith. If rafters were needed for a hip roofed barn, a wedge shape door for a ice house, dad was called. He built many sleighs, cutters, barns, boats, houses in the neighborhood. He built a sawmill, a shingle mill from scrap metal. He had the foresight, the knack of innovation, the patience, perseverance and skill to construct any equipment needed made of wood or metal. His first home he built in 1908 in Everett, Washington still is in use.

During those early days dad trapped in winter to augment our meager income. He received $300.00 for one pelt, a silver fox, bought by John McAuley and displayed in his fur store in Grande Prairie. In 1919 we moved back to Everett for 4 years. When we again came north our family had increased, I had 2 brothers, Earl and Niel. Dad farmed until 1944, that year he passed away. Mother remarried Mr. Webster, who shortly also passed away. She is still living, age 95, the oldest old timer in the area.

After completing high school in Grande Prairie in 1928, I farmed with my father, trapping and logging in winter. I married Eva Lemky in 1937, moved to Everett, Washington until 1942, where I was engaged in the fuel business. On returning I started my own farming operation on 5-72-3, eventually building my present home on S.E. 6-72-3-W6th. We were blessed with 4 children, Gregory deceased, Everett in the trucking business at Ft. St. John, B.C., Roger, a designing engineer for Allied Farm Equipment at Winnipeg, Diane Yvette Blackwell, mastering in biology and teaching at Regina University, Regina, Sask.

Through the years I've been engaged in many occupations other than farming, a heavy duty truck driver and welder on the Alcan Highway, school bus driver, crop insurance adjuster, oil field hand, carpenter, cook, bookkeeper, saw mill operator,

reporter. My avocation is writing, soon to become my vocation.

NEIL PATTERSON STORY — by Neil — March, 1977

I, Neil Patterson, was born in Everett, Washington in 1920. While still an infant we moved to Canada and settled on a farm in the Glen Leslie district where I grew up. I attended the Somme school for most of my education. After that I farmed until 1951, then I worked on the oil rigs.

I met Alberta Ruch, who was working at the Fort St. John Hospital in B.C., and the following year we were married.



Brian, Alberta, Ellen, Neil, Donna, and Shelley Patterson, 1975.

I continued to work on the oil rigs for the next 12 years. We then moved to Grande Prairie where I worked as a carpenter for about 15 years.

During this time we had 4 children. Our oldest child, Brian, has just finished University in Edmonton. The second eldest, Ellen, is now married to Gary Mitchell and works in the Alberta Treasury Bank in Grande Prairie. The two youngest, Donna and Shelly, are still attending school in Sexsmith.

In 1973, we purchased the store at Bezanson and moved there, where we still reside and operate same.

RAY PATTERSON STORY — written by Winnifred (Patterson) Tucker

Glen Leslie, Alberta, holds some of my fondest memories. It is my hope to return one day to visit some old friends and experience again the country that meant so much to the Patterson family. In fact, writing this summary of our nine years in Glen Leslie, I realize how lucky we were to have known the closeness which homestead life can bring. I am saddened that our own children and grandchildren never experienced shaping a new life from such a beautiful, untamed land as Alberta was in those years. When I realize that they have never even seen the Northern Lights, which are still so vivid in my mind, I feel a sense of loss for them. Indeed, my daughter and my brother's children are amazed as I recount our adventure in this family record.



Noel Patterson, Ray Patterson and Lawrence Kesler at Glen Leslie.

Many of the Patterson line had already settled in Canada before my own family first filed in Alberta in 1914. My father, O. R. "Ray" Patterson, originally from Illinois, and my mother, Minnie (Missouri), filed on the land described in the original papers as: NE6 TP72 RGE3 W6; nature of grant-home; granted July 8, 1914; patent issued September 17, 1919.

My grandparents, W. O. and Nancy L. "Fir" Patterson (Illinois), held papers which read: SW8 TP72 RGE3 W6; nature of grant-home; granted July 14, 1914; patent issued December 17, 1919.

My uncle, James Otto "Ott" Patterson, held papers which read SW5 TP72 RGE3 W6; nature of grant-home; granted July 8, 1974; patent issued September 1, 1920.

My dad, Ray Patterson, always amazed me . . . working so hard and still finding time to file for a homestead and "prove-up" on his land. Dad worked for Robins Transfer Company in Everett, Washington for years. He drove horse-drawn stages and battled heavy trunks for twelve to fifteen hours a day. Later, Dad had a grocery store for several years in Everett. During this time, my father filed for and worked his homestead in Glen Leslie, leaving his family alone for long periods of time. I can remember my father arranging for food and supplies for the family during his absences. But my mother took in laundry and ironing to provide her household money and, when Dad returned, she never owned a dime. Those years were very hard for my mother and father.

My dad, his father and brother first filed in Alberta before the railroad reached Grande Prairie. The men traveled as far as Edmonton by train and then packed in by way of High Prairie to prove up on their acreage. I don't remember much about the trip, but it must have been an ordeal. It took several journeys to file and prove up on the homesteads in order to keep their claims valid.

My grandparents and uncle finally settled on their homesteads in 1924. My aunt, Gertrude Osier, and her son, Jack, lived with my grandparents. Gert was later married to Bert Berry in Alberta.

The big step for us to leave Everett, Washington, our home, relatives and friends of many years, finally arrived. We left Everett in May, 1926, headed for a new life for all of us . . . my parents, my sister Velma and her husband Lawrence Koestler, my brother Noel L. "Si", my cousin Ferrie Osier and myself, Winnifred (Winnie to most).

I remember so well the day we arrived in Grande Prairie. My grandfather, W. O. Patterson, met us at the train station in a surrey, which really was a surprise to me. I don't know what I expected, but it was a pleasant new experience. We traveled from the station to Grandpa's place over terrible mud and water roads. I remember they called the mud "gumbo". Our family had always been very close, so needless to say, we had a wonderful reunion.



Winnifred Paterson and friend.

After staying with my grandparents for a while, Dad sold his homestead and bought a farm from Sam Anderson about a mile or so from the Glen Leslie store (run by Ed Leslie, I believe). The farm joined Ross Wales' property.

When we moved to the farm, our furniture and Dad's car were still being shipped, so we slept on straw ticks on the floor. Well, they say you can get used to anything, and we did! Eventually, our furnishings did arrive and all was well.

I remember our house so well. It was a log house and really very cozy. How well I remember those cold, cold winters. We slept upstairs and when we awoke in the morning, I believe we could count every nail in the ceiling. They would be covered with frost, looking like thousands of little stars.

We were one of the lucky families who had water pumped to the house. However, the pumped water was so hard you couldn't get a lather to save your soul. So my father would fill barrels with softer water from the neighbor's place and haul them back by sled. Mom used this water for her laundry.

My grandmother had to melt snow for their water. Grandpa had a well which they packed with snow during the winter. This provided them with water for the summer months.

It took a lot preparation in those days just to keep the household going. In the wintertime, the men cut and hauled enough wood to last for months, since, for a big part of the year, access to fuel was very limited. In the winter, my dad, brother Si and brother-in-law Lawrence cut ice from the river and hauled it to our granary. They packed the ice in the grain and it lasted long into the summer. We made ice cream in summer. We often used wild strawberries — delicious!

Dad and Uncle Ott had a threshing machine and traveled from farm to farm in the fall, trying to get the crops cared for before the snow fell. They worked so hard, only getting a few hours' sleep. But they didn't seem to mind. All were "happy-go-lucky".

When the crew worked on Dad's crops, we had most of the hands staying at our house. We provided them room and board, which was part of the wage agreement. Mealtimes were really a workout. They ate full breakfasts and mom made huge lunches to take into the fields. She filled two tables for the evening meal . . . and how they ate!

I had gone to work in the Grande Prairie Post Office, which was across from Charles Dunlop's livery stable. My dad hauled his grain into town by sled and I could watch the men coming in one those cold days, their faces almost frozen. Some of them had icicles on their beards. Many of the children from the farms would stop by the post office for me to bundle them up for the walk home from school. They weren't able to ride the horses into town during the winter. They needed the physical activity of walking to keep them from freezing on their way to school. Travel in town wasn't easy, either! Even the boardwalks didn't help. The snow kept everything covered and each trip meant cutting a new path. I remember a few times when the temperature dropped to forty-five and sixty degrees below zero F. I understand the climate is warmer now.

I had to live in town during the winter because travel was too difficult. Glen Leslie, and home, were about fifteen miles east of Grande Prairie. We had to be very careful, driving those snowbound roads. If a horse stepped off the road into the soft snow, it could bog down and that was very serious. In fact, that very thing happened to me and a boyfriend, Sid Fietenburg. We had visited at my grandmother's house and were returning home. The horse stepped off the road and its head was buried in a snow bank. His weight was too much for us to handle and the poor animal suffocated. Well, it became a local joke . . . instead of "running out of gas", my date let the horse die!

Another time, my mother had to be hospitalized in Grande Prairie. Dr. O'Brien was taking her into town

by snowmobile. Dad cautioned him to stick close to the packed roadway, but he cut across through the soft snow and stripped the gears in the machine. So Dad pulled them into town with the horses.

Everyone looked forward to the social events at the Bezanson Community Hall. Bezanson was not much more than a post office and general store, as was Glen Leslie. Dancing would start in the evening and last until midnight, when there was an intermission. The women had packed lunches and, when the lunches were eaten, there was more dancing until three or four in the morning, sometimes. Those events were really fun and a nice way for friends to get together in the winter.

Dad really loved life in Glen Leslie. But that life had its heartaches, too. Looking out over his land and crops, he was so proud. Then a wind storm, hail or rain would pass through, laying the crops flat. A year's hard work gone overnight.

My grandparents, Mother and Dad and Si left Glen Leslie around October, 1935 . . . the last car out before the snow. My sister Velma and her husband left later, by train. I stayed on at the Grande Prairie P.O. until April, 1936, when I followed the family out of Canada.

MERYLE (BUSTER) PATTERSON

I was born in Grande Prairie, July 1st, 1928, son of Adda and Guy Patterson, and raised in Glen Leslie district. I received my education in the Somme School. My first teacher was Mrs. Gertrude Clarkson. Upon leaving school I helped my father put in the crop in the spring. Then worked out during the summer. After harvest I would go to the bush for the winter at Crooked Creek Lumber Co. mill owned by Charlie Moon and Hecter Morrison.

On Oct. 24, 1951 I married Mary (Polly) Stark, daughter of James and Margaret Stark of Bezanson.

We moved to a one room shack on my parent's farm. This was to be our home for the first year or so.



Meryle, Polly Patterson, Billie, Leslie and Danny.

On Sept. 6, 1952 we were blessed with our first child William James (Billy): Two more sons followed Daniel Meryle (Danny) Dec. 2, 1954 and Leslie Allen, Sept. 17, 1956.

I took over my parent's farm in 1957 and we have remained here ever since.

The children received their elementary schooling at Bezanson, and completed their high school at Sexsmith and Grande Prairie. Daniel attended two years of Automotive Service Technology at SAIT in Calgary. And on Dec. 9, 1974 he received his Mechanics License. Leslie is a fourth year apprentice Electrician. He is taking his training program at NAIT in Edmonton.

Billy was struck with cupids arrow, and on March 5, 1971 married Diane Alstad, daughter of Jack and Gwen Alstad of Wembley, Alta. Their first home was in the same shack that Polly and I lived in.

To date we have two grandchildren: Jason Leigh, born June 22, 1974 and Dustin James born July 26, 1976. 1976.

Diane and Billy are both employed by the Grande Prairie, Post Office.

Danny was married on March 19, 1977 to Brenda Lewis, daughter of Ray and Doreen Lewis of Grande Prairie.



John Pollock seeding.

JIM POLLOCK

Came to Canada from Scotland in 1928, a year later than the rest of the family. He worked for many of the neighbors, cribbing wells and general farm work. Some of those he worked for were: Harry Card, Rowe Thompson, Jack Hunter, Jack Lupton, Ike Boyer, Bobby Taylor, Steve Garrett, Bill Wagar and Lawrence Cowell.

He worked in the coal mines at Drumheller and Carbon Valley and the Spring Creek Coal mine south west of Grande Prairie.

Jim enlisted in the R.C.A.S.C. in 1940-47.

Now resides in Victoria, B.C. with his wife, the former Evelyn Iceberg. They have five children.

KATHERINE POLLOCK (DONOHUE)

Came with her family to Canada in 1927 at the age of 15. She worked for the Bill Fords and Nick Smashnuks of Bezanson until she married Pete Donohue in 1931. They raised seven children. Kate passed away in 1976.

JOHN POLLOCK

Came to Canada 1927. Much of his younger years he spent doing general farm work for Pete Donohue, Steve Garrett, Vern Goff and Rusty Holingsworth of Teepee Creek. He spent some time working near Sudbury, Ontario. Later he purchased the farm formerly owned by Jess Harris. While still on the farm, he started working on the oil rigs that were located around Fort St. John. He later worked as a painter for the government, and retired from this position in 1976. John and his wife, the former Dorothy Lott live in Grande Prairie. They have three children: Margaret (Mrs. Gary Ockert), Grande Prairie, Janet of Edmonton and Ken of Williams Lake, B.C.

ALEX POLLOCK

Came from Glasgow, Scotland in 1927 and attended school at Somme School in the Glen Leslie district. Alex made the Bill Garretts' his second home, and went to school from there. He also worked at Buffalo Lakes logging for Ray Lott, and was working for him at the time of his death in 1939.

MAY POLLOCK

May came with her family from Scotland in 1927 and attended school at Somme. She later married Albert Voz of Grande Prairie and were only married a few months when she passed away in 1941.

TOM BURROWS

After coming to Canada he spent many of his prewar years working on the farm and was employed by many of the local farmers, Oscar Albinati, Norman Talbot, Oscar Regnier of Bezanson. For three years he homesteaded in the Fitzimmons district. He enlisted with the R.C.A.M.C. from 1939-45. He married the former Vera Rees of Edmonton. They farmed for some time in the Crystal Creek district, some of their children attending school there. They returned to Edmonton and worked for the government until his retirement in 1975. Tom resides with his wife at Ladysmith, B.C. Ten children were born from this union.

ALEX BURROWS

He arrived in Canada from Scotland 1927. Alex completed the remaining years of his schooling at Somme School. He worked for the Jim Storms, Cowells, Bill Garretts and others in the area. He homesteaded with brother Tom at Fitzimmons. Then enlisted with 49th Edmonton Regiment in 1939. Alex married in England during the war. He returned to Canada with his wife Winnie. They now reside in Montreal and have 4 children.

HECTOR BURROWS

Came to Canada in 1927 from Scotland. He worked as a farm hand for many of the neighbors in the district. He enlisted in the tank corps and saw active service overseas. Hector now resides in Faust.

BILL BURROWS

Came to Canada in 1927. For some time he was kept busy working for local farmers, such as George Young, Bill Garrett, Lawrence Withers. Bill also barbered in the Phil Lessonway Barber Shop. He enlisted in the Navy 1939. Bill now resides in Calgary with his wife Marie. They have three sons, Ron, Randy and Brian.

GEORGE BURROWS

After coming to Canada, he attended school at Somme 1930-1939. He worked for the Alf Moons and stayed on the farm until he enlisted in 1942 and went overseas. He returned to Canada and volunteered service in Korea. George now resides in Victoria, B.C.

DAVID BURROWS

Came to Canada from Scotland at the age of 3 years. Attended Somme School in the Glen Leslie district 1931-39. He remained on the farm until he enlisted. He went overseas and was married in England. He returned with his wife Iris to reside in Grande Prairie. He drove the horse drawn milk wagon, also worked for Fred Dobyn at Imperial Motors. He returned to England with his family in 1956. They have two sons Pete and John and one daughter Judy.

LESLIE BURROWS

Attended Somme School 1932-1940. He remained on the farm until 1951. He married the former Wilma Scott. They now reside in Grande Prairie. They have two children Dale of Millet, Alberta and Lois of Grande Prairie.

HELEN BURROWS

Attended Somme School, also Bezanson High School. She was married in 1946 to Jim Horrigan, a cousin of the Garretts. They have 5 children, Ron and Ken of Grande Prairie, Dennis of Edmonton, daughters, Dianne Hudson, and Gloria Wilson of Grande Prairie.

WILLIAM RICHIE

William, Richie homesteaded on S.E. 6-72-3 W6. in Feb. 1914. He joined the army and the farm was later sold to George Cave.

RAY ROBIDEAU

In 1927, Ray Robideau, youngest child of Edwin and Florence Robideau, was born in his parents home in Bezanson. He was raised in Bezanson and attended Linsey School. In 1952, he married Jean Coney, daughter of Ted (Edward) and Bobbie (Roberta) Coney of the East Kleskun district.

In 1959, they moved to the Glen Leslie district and settled on the south of the school section (S.W. 11-72-46) adjoining Lawrence Withers.

They had five children when they arrived in the Glen Leslie district; Sherman, Wendell, Chris, Trudy and Debbie and had three more children after — Charlotte, Janice and Roberta.

All eight children attended Harry Balfour School and Grande Prairie Composite High School. Trudy married Ron Anders of Grande Prairie and they have two children, Shondel and Clayton. Debbie married Larry Fitchett of Debolt in 1974 and they have two children, Tina and Tracey.

ANDUS ROCHEFELLER

Andus Rochefeller came with Andress in 1913 and filed on the N.W. 26-71-4-W6. In 1920 he sold to Sam

Anderson, who came from U.S.A. to Sask., then to Glen Leslie. Anderson built a new house, fenced his land, he had obtained the west half, broke ten acres every year. In 1925 his Marquis wheat, on breaking, averaged 71 bu. per acre.

In 1926, due to ill health, Mr. and Mrs. Anderson sold their land to Ray Patterson and family and moved back to U.S.A.

LEN D. ROSSERS

Some of Len D. Rosser's experiences in the north might bring back memories to the old and interest to the young.

About 1909, he left his home in Ailsa Craig, Ont. and headed west to Fernie, B.C. where he worked in Quil's hardware. Then he travelled to Edmonton and on to Grande Prairie with C. Benson. That was the 8th of April, 1911 and buildings were needed. He bought a tent, and with others went to work, but always keeping his eye open for a homestead.

Finally one day, while scouting about, he saw in the distance a pretty grove of trees and decided to choose this quarter of land on the N.E. 10-72-4 W6th about seventeen miles from Grande Prairie. There he pitched a tent, built a sod roofed log cabin and called the place "Sunny Slope."



Levi Rossers Homestead House, 1916.

Some years later, when money was scarce, he and Jack Shortreed decided to run a saw mill on the Wapiti River.

About this time my dad, T. A. Moodie, visited the north country. He went home to Perth, Ont. and told my brothers that this new land was the place for them. So we were finally settled at Clairmont. But our pleasures in this new land soon ceased when my brother Gordon, Gerald Carveth and Lambert Wellwood answered the call to defend their country and left for England. Those were dark days but all three returned. My brother spent two years with Rheumatic Fever, in the hospital. He never fully recovered but managed to carry on and live a full life until a year ago.

The bachelors at home raising the crops badly needed wives, and L. D. Rosser was no exception.

Still after the elusive dollar he chopped grain for the farmers. One day when he was heating oil on the stove he looked and saw his frame shack in flames. Two hundred rounds of ammunition in the roof were popping off but he managed to reach through the window and get his gun, (now a prized relic on my sons wall). So back he moved to the sturdy log cabin now used as a blacksmith shop. Later on we spent our honeymoon there, the beginning of fifty-four years of wedded bliss, a phrase seldom heard anymore.

He had bought the Wagar quarter, near a spring and good soil. We decided to build our home with the lumber available. There our daughter "Barbara" was born, causing some consternation to my sister Norval, a nurse just returned from France, and spending the winter with us.

Later the crops looked promising, but one day a black cloud appeared, hail struck. It leveled the beautiful garden, buried the crops and our hopes for paying for the place. Later back to that ancient log cabin being used as a granary and a haven for mice.

Time passed. At 4 A.M. one frosty morning Lee was jolted out of sleep to hurry over the hill to get that grand lady Mrs. Turner. She heard the car coming and was at the door waiting but the stork won the race. We had a lovely girl, we named Beth. Lee was rather envious of Ashely Thompson, the possessor of a second son. The dreams of free help on the farm faded a little. The depression continued. We decided to follow the advice of my brother now in California. With sadness and misgivings, we left taking my mother with a fuller pocket book than ours. By travelling two hundred miles a day, we reached our destination in a month. We stayed with my family a year or more. Lee did not enjoy this hectic city with crowds and traffic but managed to spend the winter. He finally settled in Vancouver, B.C.

Four sons joined our family. As they grew up their dad's concern was how they would become hard working respectable citizens. He proceeded to teach them of the life he had faced. I think often he wished he had that farm to make a better job of working off some of that boundless energy they had.

He tried to impress them with the hardships he had growing up; and the stories of those days began to unfold.

One time the raft of lumber was grounded and he swam the icy Wapiti River to reach a boat on shore. He finally reached it, too exhausted to move for some time. Another beauty . . . It was spring. The men had to be brought from the mill. The sloughs had melted and the only way was by the railroad. He devised a plan of making a wooden wheel to put on one car wheel and he rode the rails. Along the way the train crew ahead moved the freight train on the siding and he reached Clairmont. There he replaced the car wheel.

There was another story that came in handy when a certain food was distasteful. This story was about cutting a trail, losing the grubbox in the river and travelling for days on an empty stomach, finally reaching an Indian Camp and food that tasted heavenly.

Twenty-five years later we returned and saw so much natural beauty, clean air and peace that we had missed. We appreciated the remarks from those returning long ago from a big congested smoggy city, like "This is God's Country and no one should dispute that."

Now I hear the grandchildren say, "I wish Grandpa was here. He'd show me how to fix this," so they persevere.

They have a great interest in the places he talked about and realize the problems that race of pioneers faced with courage and endurance. We hope they can too, if the need arises.

LEO SCHROEDER

Leo Schroeder homesteaded on the S.E. 2-72-4 W6 with S.A.S. W4 Sec. 1-72-4 W6 filing in Nov. 1911. He was first counselor in the district. In 1919 the land was sold to Bert Berg.

GEORGE SINCLAIR

George Sinclair, after returning from the war, filed on N.W. 17-71-3 W6. After proving up, he sold his homestead to Charles Weaver.

JOSIAH SMITH

Josiah Smith was born in England. He migrated to the U.S.A. and worked as a cowboy for several years. In 1919 he came to Grande Prairie and homesteaded on the N.W. 21-71-3 W6. Mr. Smith built a log house, barn, and granary and broke enough land to prove up his quarter. He worked at odd jobs for the neighbors, having about six or seven favorites. He made the rounds to these neighbors for tobacco and to get his stomach full. After the age of seventy he received old age pension and had more money than he ever had before. He built himself a new lumber shack, and got a decent stove. He rented his land to Rinhart Ladwig and more or less just visited the Ladwig home then.



Josiah Smith at his new house.

Joe took sick and went to the hospital at the age of 79. When he told one of the nurses that he wanted to get married, she told him that her mother would marry him. The nurse made the arrangements and her mother came from Edmonton to Grande Prairie and married Joe. They moved to the farm, Joe added to his house and hauled water for her chickens and the extra washing. A year or so later Joe died. Mrs. Smith sold the land to Rinhart Ladwig and moved back to Edmonton.

NICK SYCH

Nick Sych, my father, came to Canada in March of 1928. In Sept. of the same year his wife, Anna, and two small children followed him. The family settled in Mundare, Alberta where he worked as a carpenter. When the first pangs of the depression hit the country, he found himself out of a job with no prospects, so the family decided to try their luck at farming.

In those days, the Government encouraged the people to settle in the Great Peace River country, where one could file a homestead consisting of 160 acres for ten dollars. In the early spring, my Dad travelled by train to Sexsmith and from there he went to that part of the country which is roughly halfway between Teepee Creek and Bad Heart. He found what looked to be a nice piece of land and decided to claim it as his homestead.

He returned to Mundare to pick up the family. We arrived in Sexsmith by train about April of the same year, and after loading our wagon with our few earthly possessions we started on a thirty mile trip over a rough and muddy road to our new home in the wilderness. It took nearly two days. When we got there we discovered that what looked to Dad like a meadow covered with snow turned out to be acres of windfall and small trees chewed off at the snowline by the rabbits.

Of course there was no house. That summer we lived in a neighbour's log cabin as he was away working in a sawmill. Dad at once began to build a log house. We had one horse, a cow, some chickens, a few household utensils, a sewing machine, a lamp, plus some bedding and a grey colored dog. Dad plowed a small patch for a garden; Mother planted some potatoes, carrots, turnips, beets and cabbage.

Early every morning Dad would go over to work on the house. Mother would stay behind to do household chores, work on the garden and prepare the noonday meal. In the afternoon she would go with Dad to help on the house. My brother and I would be left behind to guard the chickens from the hawks and foxes. But the hawk had no respect for two small children and a grey dog and would swoop down and steal a half grown chicken only a few yards away from us.

Later that summer Dad had to go and work in a sawmill in order to earn some shiplap for the roof of our house and also some lumber for the floor, table and benches. It was at this time, when he was away, one bright moonlit night Mother heard the sound of tom-toms and Indians singing coming from the east, probably somewhere near the Smoky River. This frightened her very much and she woke us up. I think she was preparing us for an Indian attack. However

nothing came of it, so after awhile we went back to bed.

One morning in the late fall when the frost had hardened the ruts in the road to the consistency of stones, we packed our earthly goods including what was left of the chickens into a wagon box, tied the cow behind and set out on a half mile trip to our own home. Mother walked behind carrying the coal oil lamp so it would not get broken. It was quite a big house so that first winter they decided to use only the half of it so it would be easier to keep warm as it got very cold. I must add that Dad built a nice warm barn for the animals and dug a well which is still there.

We lived very close to nature and as children enjoyed many small things. We just loved to go into the forest to try and spot small wild animals. The winter evenings were very long and we had to make up our own playthings. One late cold winter night, after we children were in bed, a man from the Badheart area was returning from Sexsmith with a sleigh and team of horses. He was walking behind to keep warm. His horses got frightened of something and suddenly took off. He tried to jump on the sleigh to grab the reins but his foot slipped and the sleigh ran over his leg. Mother and Dad heard him call so Dad went out and with Mother's help dragged the man into the house and laid him on the couch. The man had a broken leg and had to be taken to Sexsmith. After making the man as comfortable as possible, Dad brought a few good sized stones and laid them on the top of our cookstove and Mother kept the fire going to get the stones hot. They stayed up all night and towards morning Dad went and got a couple of neighbours to come and help to move the man into a box on the sleigh. They had a good layer of hay in it to make it warm and soft. Mother wrapped the stones that were hot in blankets and they placed them near the man then tucked quilts around him in preparation for the long trip ahead. The man recovered after a stay in the hospital and went back to his home in the Badheart district. Another interesting thing that happened was an old Indian lady would come around in the early fall of the year and would ask if the family needed any moccasins. Usually Mother would sit us children down and the Indian lady would measure the length of our feet with a piece of string and tie a knot to make the length of the foot. She had quite a few knots in the string, and it used to puzzle me to no end when late on in the fall she would arrive with two pair of moccasins that fit perfectly. They had very nice beadwork on them and we children were delighted.

It became apparent to our parents that we children had to go to school, as my brother had reached school age and I was well past. They enrolled us in the River Top school. It was close to five miles away. In the wintertime Dad would drive us part way then pick us up in the evening. But during the spring and autumn when he needed the horses for field work we would have to walk. The school was built of logs and it had a big barrel heater at the back and a row of nails to hang our clothes on. Also there were a row of nails to hang our cups on as the drinking water was brought in a bucket and each family had to use their own cups.

Sometimes we had fun too. There were the Christmas concerts. There, as anywhere else, they came once a year and were sure to provide a bag of goodies and a small gift for each child. The older folks enjoyed it too as it was a time to get together with their neighbours and see their offspring on the stage singing Christmas Carols or strutting through some part in a little play. I always remember one of the greatest treats at these Christmas concerts, was an orange, as we only got it once a year.

Towards the end of the school year we had a picnic, and that too included the whole community. There were races, softball games, and of course homemade ice-cream and real soda pop in bottles. I just loved strawberry soda as it looked so pretty in a bottle. It was hard to decide whether to drink it or just look at it. We had very few colored things in our lives.

In 1937 my parents decided to move to the Klesken Hill area. We still had no car so again we moved with a wagon and a team of horses. However by now we had a few more animals and a few more household things so Dad had to make two or three trips. We rented the Monasterski house on Kleskun Hill; We shortly met some very fine neighbours. There were the Knights, Grandma Turner, Hubert Manning, Sandy and Donald Cameron, Mrs. Tempest and, of course, the Jim Storms. We children enrolled in the East Kelskun Hill school, and had some very fine teachers. We also made some very good friends amongst the students.

While in the Monasterski house Dad bought a quarter section of land which was directly west from Jim Storms. He spent the summer building a house, a barn and doing some plowing. He also tried to get a well but without much success. We moved to our own place the following spring. We had to haul all our water from where we rented before, a distance of about a mile. This was a great hardship and finally Dad scooped out a dam and the following year we at least had water on the place for the animals and for washing.

Our usual route to school would take us along the east side of Kleskun Hill then down through Mrs. Tempest's farm and out on the road near Jack Luptons; then down the road a bit and cut through Bill Wagar's field and finally arrive at the school. Many times on our way to school we were greatly intrigued by the large skeletons along the foot of the Kleskun hill. Upon inquiring we were told that during the earlier times shortly after Kleskun Lake was drained and the farmers began to cultivate the land there were huge herds of wild horses that would descend on the grain fields and destroy them. The farmers organized a hunting party to kill off the horses. They managed to corner many of them on Kleskun hill and shoot them. Sometimes on the way home from school we would poke along the shale and find some odd looking pieces of stone. In later years we found out from Mr. Cochrane that they were dinosaur bones. In the spring of the year the blossoms on the Cacti along the ridge of the hill were simply beautiful.

After a few years Dad rented a half section of land from Mrs. Turner. It was located directly south of our place and Jim Storms. We moved into the house that was located on it, as it made it much closer to Lindsey High School for my brother and I. This was the

shortest distance we ever had to go to school, only three and a half miles. Several years later my family bought land opposite on the south side of the road. Here my Dad built a house and other buildings. In later years they moved to Grande Prairie where they lived for several years.

Later they retired to Chilliwack in British Columbia where they are still living. Their son Walter passed away in 1973. I, their daughter live in Chilliwack also.

P.S. Mr. Sych was known as the bee man or honey man in the Glen Leslie district, because he had many bee hives and sold honey.

SUCH FEW SHORT DAYS AGO — by Gordon Thompson

I am told that it was a very unscheduled flight for the stork (no hi-jackers) when he presented my mother and father, Agnes and Ashley Thompson, with a tiny three and a half pound parcel on George Washington's birthday, many, many years ago at Kleskun Hill, Alberta. My parents, who came here from Kansas, U.S.A. already had one son, Chester Nile, and I would be his little brother, Russell Gordon. The first six weeks of my life were spent in a P. V. Croken shoe box, with cotton-batting for a mattress. My warm little nest was placed on the open oven door and stayed there all of that time. Mrs. "Gramma" Turner, a retired doctor, gave me my first welcome spanking.



Gordon with his bride Julia, Oct. 1947.

Nile was still going to Kleskun Hill school when I started there, but it was Doris Muchiew that really looked after me. My teacher was T. G. Irvin and they had double desks then. Two pupils sat together. The little ones sat with the older ones. I remember I kept falling asleep, so Mr. Irvin told me if I wanted to sleep that I should go outside, so I took my pony, Ned, and went home. He looked and looked for me and finally saw me going down the road towards home. Mother wasn't too pleased when I arrived and headed me back to school to find out that the teacher had sort of planted the idea.

Nile was soon away to high school, in Grande Prairie and later, in Clairmont. Shortly afterwards sorrow came to our home in the winter of 1931, on February 28, when pneumonia suddenly took Nile from us. He was only sixteen and the only brother I had. I remember Ruth Thomas coming to stay with us, and there wasn't much snow that year. Dad drove the touring car from home, across the country, to the funeral in Grande Prairie.

One year later I had a baby brother, Donald Ashley, and found school and home more interesting. One of the penalties for unattentive children in school was to carry in wood for the teacherage after school. I think I packed an awful lot of wood in, that winter. Rewarding it was, however, for both of us. I was promoted into the next grade and the teacher got her man — the reason for all that burned-up wood, in the evenings, I guess. Well, with considerable hard work, on the teachers part, I soon finished my grade nine and by this time my fathers failing health required my help on the farm. I enjoyed farming at home because I loved the animals he had — horses, cows, pigs and especially the north side of Kleskun Hill, which mostly he owned. It was adventurous and satisfying to drive seven horses on the plow, or six on the drill, or six on the harrows or four on the binder, and sometimes twelve on the big cultivator. We usually changed horses at noon. A fresh outfit would go into the field and the others would rest. Mother and Dad always kept hired help in the busy season, like spring and fall and haying time, and we had some good times together. Everyone worked hard and turned in early as it was usually an early start in the mornings.

Still with all this work, there was always time for the Grande Prairie Fair, every summer. Dad loved to enter his stock and grains and Mom, her baking and handicrafts. We all would be involved in the preparations and practicing. I know one particular time it was a long drawn-out affair getting the pigs scrubbed. They had nicely been cleaned up when three of us — my cousins and I, decided it was a lot of fun throwing eggs at them. We had found a nest in the barn and I'm sure they weren't all fresh. What a job that was, getting those porkers clean again, when Dad discovered the catastrophe! Would it be conceited to say that those animals took first place, the next day at the fair? All this time-consuming and hard work still spared some moments for our pony, Gypsy, and I to enter in a few exciting and rewarding events.



L. to R. Murray, Marlaine and late Laurie Thompson with 4-H calves, 1968.

One year after a wet fall of cutting, stooking and threshing our crops, Dad said he could spare me for the winter if I cared to work for the Buffalo Lakes Lumber company. This was up in the Burnt River Hills north of Sexsmith. As it turned out I hauled railroad ties for them for two winters. In 1939 I hauled ties, driving four horses owned by Harry Card. When there were no ties to haul, I hauled freight to the bush camp. For pay we received seven dollars and fifty cents per month and George Brown's delicious cooking. Oh, the life of a long line skinner! Up at four and to bed at ten. The next winter I had Dad's horses to drive, towing on a hill that was too steep for the trucks to make on their own. But I always managed to have George's hot cakes for breakfast at six and warm pie or lunch at ten before going to bed. That was having a little pull with the cook, even if he was a man.

That same winter, while trying to take a good bath outside, between two piles of lumber (the sun was hot), I got pneumonia and ended up in Frank Donald's Hotel in Grande Prairie for two weeks. Quite a few of the boys bathed in the same fashion but never got sick. The hospital was too full, so there were a few patients at the hotel. Doctor Carlyle looked after us just the same.

The following winters saw me closer to home as I felt Dad needed me. Looking after Bezanson Co-op Grain Cleaner became my yearly winter job for six years. I covered most of these eleven districts represented in this book, staying over night in ninety-five per cent of the homes in this area. They were a jolly good bunch to work with and their motto was,

"Up early and work hard all the day,
Making sure you had made it pay.
Hurrying on, to find a new place to stay,
Before you were ready to hit the hay."

In 1945 Dad decided to sell and moved to the coast. I still thought farming not too bad a life, so stayed behind and bought N.E. 18-72-3-W6 (East Kleskun), and farmed this, along with some rented land. Those were trying days for me and it turned out that batching while farming with horses was almost too much. I remember one day I made gravy and it didn't turn out too well, so I gave it to Bingo, my dog. He just sat there and looked at me and when I turned my back I could hear him scratching most vigorously to cover it up. Needless to say my firm beliefs in bachelorhood began to weaken. I started to make my visits more frequent to the neighbors across the road. I soon discovered a taste for and enjoyed someone elses cooking. With this in mind I convinced my future bride, their daughter, that I would end my bachelor days forever and she agreed, since I was eating there most of the time, anyway. In 1947, on October 25 I married the former Julia Podulsky. We had a Model A Ford car for transportation, at that time.

School was so challenging in those days — nine or ten grades in one room with one teacher. "Shanks ponies" or "Old Dobbyn" was the only means of transportation, and talk about unscheduled air flights and crash landings! Sometimes in the winter, when they drove the open cutter and one horse, "Beauty", it would be terribly cold. The bigger boys, would run out and put the horse in the barn when they got to school. Of course, all this exercise kept everyone physically fit, she muses, what with all that walking in the summer and then still chores and homework when they got home. She can't recall any fat children in school. Completion of grade twelve took her to St. Joseph's high school in Grande Prairie, and after a spell with rheumatic fever, which was making its rounds in the country at the time, she started correspondence supervising and some teaching, and kept at it for four years. A supplement for our farming after our marriage, it was.

We continued to farm on N.E. 18-72-3-W6, for seven years and during this time we were blessed with a daughter, Marlaine, and two sons, Murray and Laurence (Laurie).

We were outgrowing our small farm and home, so after much thought and consideration given to "a larger place", on January 31, 1955, we embarked on a short journey with all our belongings (a hay rack full) to N.E. 7-72-3-W6 (the former Harry Card land).

From here our children were bused to Bezanson consolidated school for their nine grades. The school vans also took them to Grande Prairie for their high school education at St. Joseph's High.

As we look back we can't forget their involvement with 4-H activities. They were in the Grande Prairie 4-H Beef club and under the capable and inspiring leadership of their leader, Neil Moon, they benefitted greatly from their unlimited projects, competitions and recreational arrangements. The parents were always included and this was a source of social life and enjoyment for all of us.

Like most families we've had our joys and our sorrows. We are still on the farm and enjoy the coun-

try life, and look forward to enjoying our grandchildren. Presently, children are our side-line as a school bus makes our place home base during the school term.

Our family have all grown up now. Marlaine was a steno and studied piano. She married Gary Hessler of Silver Valley and he is in the banking business in Brooks, Alberta, where they live. They have a son, Darren, and a daughter, Kimberly. Murray married Shirley Lux, a steno, of Grande Prairie and he is making heavy-duty mechanics his career. They live in Grande Prairie. Laurie was a heavy-duty mechanic until November 14, 1974, when we were hit with a bitter blow of his tragic death on Highway 34, just seven miles from home. He was only 21. If you will bear with us I would like to conclude our story with this beautiful poem sent to us as a tribute to him.

MEMORIES OF LAURIE — composed by Donna McNally on behlaf of 4-H and school friends

A quiet student, but a friend to all
Eager and willing to tackle each day.
An innocent look, but a mischevious mind
Remember the jokes and tricks he liked to play.

An Animal lover, had a compassion for dogs
Loved horses and horse back riding too.
He raised "Old George" his first 4-H calf
Remember on sale day he felt pretty blue.

Studied and made mechanics his career
He liked the sounds of motors and machines
Remember the thrill of his new pick-up truck.
To tinker and work on it to him was a dream.

Now sadly missed by family and friends
As fate had it on that day.
He passed from us to the spiritual world
God felt it time to take him away.

Now time it passes quickly by
Remember a friend, a neighbor sincere
Who brings back these many thoughts
And left behind warm memories here.

MR. & MRS. TODD

Mr. and Mrs. Todd homesteaded in 1919. Mrs. Todd taught school in Bezanson until they moved away. They sold land to Duchoney. Mr. and Mrs. Duchoney stayed a few years then moved away. Mr. and Mrs. May, Mrs. Duchoney's mother and father, lived with them.

EBENESER VAN MEER

Ebeneser Van Meer homesteaded on S.W. 6-72-4 W6 in 1917. Miss Stillwell, his cousin, kept house for him. They left in 1928.

ALFRED ROSS WALES SR.

Alfred Ross Wales was born at Omagh, Ontario in the year of 1863, one of nine boys born to Robert and Annie Wales. He farmed near by until his father passed away, then he bought the home farm at Omagh. He was married to Alice Vanalstine and had six children: Ross and five girls: Mrs. Eva Parkinson, Centralia, Washington; Alice the second girl passed away at the age of 22 years; Mae Fitzpatrick living in Grande Prairie; Agnes Lewis, Springfield, Oregon; Myrtle Moon of Grande Prairie. When he came west, his son Ross was already in Edmonton and married, at Christmas time, 1912, to Annie Moon. Dan Minchin, also from Ontario, and the Moon boys came up to file on land. My Dad came with them, as Ross had filed for him a quarter of land joining his in 1912. Father came in 1913 and lived with Ross and Annie when they got their house built in 1913. They built a house for Dad the following year.



Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wales Sr.

When we got to Edmonton in March, 1915, we were there three days. The train only went to High Prairie in 1915 so we stayed there all night and Bob Moon met us there with the wagon and four horses. The roads were very bad and at the worst part the men had to put down small trees cross ways, it was called corduroy. We stayed at a stopping place once. We cooked in the house but my father decided we should sleep out in the straw. We did. I was afraid of the coyotes. I thought they were wolves.

We lived with Ross and Annie that year. That fall Dad went east and in the spring he brought out my sister Agnes.

We kept house for our father till in the spring, my mother and older sisters came out. My Mother had stayed in Ontario to look after my Grandmother and Aunt.

My Father passed away February 11, 1937 and my Mother, who spent a year with my two sisters, in the States, came back to live near Ross and passed away in 1943. They are buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery.

Ross Wales, my father, built his log house, a 20-20

two story, shingle roof building on the Edson trail rightaway. The lumber and shingles came from the Argonout mill. The road from Bezanson townsite to Grande Prairie went between the house and barn. This road was used until the early twenties by settlers, R.C.M.P., neighbors, mailman and Dr. Higbee. Some would stop to rest their horses. My mother said that one winter some Indians stopped for the night. They slept on the floor, for the house was quite open, as the only furniture there was homemade. The Indian women sat on the floor and were busy sewing in the evening. In the morning they left new beaded moccasins for each of her small children. Their pay for staying over night.

The first chickens mother had were hatched by putting hens eggs under prairie chickens which were plentiful and quite tame at that time. A setting hen was borrowed to brood the chicks. In the spring, early in the mornings, you could hear prairie chickens drumming in every direction. This was quite an invigorating experience.

WALES

Ross and Anna Wales came to the Glen Leslie area over the Edson Trail in 1912. They filed on the S.E. 35-71-4 W6. Ross was born July 17, 1888 the eldest child and only son of Alfred and Alice Wales of Ontario. When he came west he boarded and roomed at Elizabeth Moon's in Edmonton where he met Anna Moon, whom he married December 25, 1912. Anna was born in Orillia, Ontario to Rawling and Elizabeth Moon on March 7, 1886. Her father died of pneumonia in 1904, so her mother and the family of nine, six boys and three girls decided to go West to Spruce Grove where her mother's brother Peter McPhee lived. They later started a boarding house in Edmonton.

Hearing so much about the great Peace River country Ross decided to go with Pete McPhee and some others to see it. He returned. Then along with his bride Anna, Dan and Mamie Minchin, Gladys and Norman Moon, Mund McKinnley, Mrs. E. Moon (Anna's Mother), Fred, Bob and Charlie Moon her young



Ross Wales, leaving Edmonton for Grande Prairie, 1912.

brothers, and Norman Leslie set out in February 1913 over the Edson Trail to homestead. The trip took ten days. When they arrived they set up a tent which was their home until a log house was built. Alfred Wales, Ross' father who came later in 1913 also took a homestead N.E. 35-71-4 W6 and built a log house. He sent for his family, his wife Alice and daughters Eva, Agnes, Myrtle and Mae. One daughter Alice had passed away earlier.

The land was solid trees with a trail through to the neighbors. Ross made trips back to Edmonton and Edson when supplies were needed. A team of horses that



Ross Wales family, 1924.



Ross Wales family.

Ross had brought in over the trail was lost in the lake one winter. The land was cleared by axe and plowed with horses, until by the time the sons Alfred, Charlie and Jack were old enough to help, a half section had been cleared. More land was bought, some from Ray Patterson and some from Leslies and by 1940 it had become a large farm.

Ross and Anna had four children; Alfred Ross one of the first pioneer babies, Charles Edmund, John Arthur and Elizabeth Alice (Betty). One other daughter died as an infant. A new home was built on the farm in 1943. Ross and Anna took much pleasure in what they had accomplished over the years. Their family married and all lived near by so they were able to see many grandchildren and great-grandchildren added to their family. Ross took ill and after a short illness died in the Grande Prairie Hospital May 3, 1963 at the age of 75. Anna lived on the farm home until unable to care for herself she moved to the pioneer lodge in Grande Prairie. She became ill and died July 14, 1972 at 86. The oldest son Alfred now lives in the home on the farm.

ALFRED WALES

Alfred Wales, the eldest son of Ross and Anna Wales, was born in a tent on their home quarter at Glen Leslie in September 1913.



Alfred Wales' family.

Alfred started grade one at Somme School at the age of four years. He made the fifth student which enabled the school to have a teacher.

After leaving school Alfred continued on the farm during the summers and spent the winters working in logging camps. Eventually Alfred and his brother Charlie took over the farm and farmed together for many years.

In 1939 Alfred married Violet Kimble. They raised two sons and two daughters: Eleanor (Mrs. Brian McCurdy), Gerald (Jerry), Herbert (Herb) and Judith (Mrs. Lorne Nichol) of Edmonton. There are nine grandchildren in the family.

In 1967 Charlie left the farm and Alfred and his two sons Jerry and Herb took over the farming operation.

CHARLES EDMUND WALES

Charles Wales born Dec. 18, 1914 was one of the pioneer babies of the Glen Leslie district. He attended school in now the Glen Leslie Church and the Somme School, which has since been moved to Grande Prairie. He farmed with his father Ross Wales and brothers Alfred and Jack. On November 23, 1938 he married Jeanette Anderson, and they lived in the house on the land purchased from Ray Patterson W.½ Sec. 26-71-4 W6. Mr. and Mrs. Anderson lived there prior to Ray Patterson. Jeanette's family had moved to the Valleyview area in 1933 from Magrath, Alberta. Charlie then purchased W.½ Sec. 35-71-4 W6 from Steve Garrett an old timer, who had also come in over the Edson Trail. By this time Alfred and Charlie were operating the farm, Ross having retired and Jack after returning from the war had purchased land of his own.

Charlie and Jeanette had five girls: Marilyn Wales of Edmonton, a nurse, Joan (Mrs. Michael Demaine) of Sherwood Park also a nurse, Joyce Wales of Grande Prairie, a C.N.A. at the Grande Prairie Hospital, Sharon (Mrs. Jack Christie) of Trochu, a school teacher. The youngest girl, Debbie is attending school in Grande Prairie.

Jeanette took ill and passed away in January 1965. A few years later after remarrying Charlie moved to Grande Prairie and sold his farm to Alfred and his sons Jerry and Herb. Charlie purchased a number of houses and built a new home on 94 Avenue where he and his wife Alta live.

JOHN ARTHUR WALES

I was born to Mr. and Mrs. Ross Wales on June 24, 1916. I have lived in the Glen Leslie area ever since, except for the time I spent in the armed services. I joined up in 1940, did my basic training in Grande Prairie. On May 23, 1940 I married Florence Smith, a Grande Prairie girl. We went to Chilliwack where I spent two years in the Engineers Army Training Camp at Sardis, which is east of Chilliwack. Florence worked in Chilliwack. I went overseas to France with the invasion of D Day. I was lucky in the service, wounded once, got back to Canada in October 1945. In the spring of 1946 Florence and I took over the Glen Leslie Store and Post Office and a quarter section of land from Mr. and Mrs. Ed Leslie. It had been the first store in the district. Morrisons had moved it up from the Old Bezanson town site. It burned down in 1955, then I built a new store and operated it for a few years then sold it to Bob Sharpe. He moved it to Grande Prairie, then sold it. It is now located along the Clairmont Road north from Grande Prairie. A battery repair shop is using it now. The old Somme School is sitting directly behind the store.

Florence and I have three children, two daughters and a son. The girls are both married, Janice (Mrs. Danny Dorscheid) has two boys and one girl. Lynore (Mrs. Gerry Park) lives in Red Deer. Alex is completing his course in Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan to be graduating in spring of 1978.

ELIZABETH ALICE McLAUGHLIN (WALES)

I, Elizabeth Alice was born February 26, 1919. I was named after my two Grandmothers, Alice Wales and

Elizabeth Moon. I am the only daughter of Ross and Anna Wales. I grew up on the homestead and attended school, the first year in the now Glen Leslie Church. Mrs. Dorothy Leslie was the teacher at the time. I received the rest of my schooling in the new school which was just west of my farm house. I met Neil McLaughlin, son of Ira and Nellie McLaughlin of Bezanson and we were married August 8, 1940. After Neil returned from the war, as radar mechanic we lived in Beaverlodge for a year and then bought the S.E. 1-72-4 W6 from Vern Goff. It is the homestead of Dr. Higbee, the first doctor in the area. We later moved to Grande Prairie where Neil bought grain for the U.G.G., but still kept the farm. In 1965 we built a new home on the farm. Neil having given up grain buying we moved to our new home on the farm. In 1969, Neil took ill and passed away May 23, 1969. We had five children, Aileen (Mrs. Gordon Bayley) of Red Deer, Ross of Grande Prairie, Gail (Mrs. Richard Forster) of Spruce Grove, William (Bill) on the farm, Bonnie (Mrs. Duane La Valley) of Bezanson. I lived on the farm for a few years but after the children were all married I moved to Grande Prairie where I now reside. I have eleven grandchildren to date.

CHARLIE WEAVER

Charlie Weaver, my husband, was in the army four years in the First War. When he came back and wanted to farm, land was too dear in the Red Deer district where we both lived, so thought he would try the Peace River country. He got to Grande Prairie in the spring of 1919. He filed on a quarter and a soldier's grant on the east side of Muskeg Lake. Then he went back to Red Deer and loaded up a freight car with settlers effects, including 3 horses, some chickens, feed, household things and machinery. I think he told me Mr. Herman Trimball was on the same freight train, which took a week from Edmonton to Grande Prairie. Charlie batched for four years, until we were married March 24, 1924 so there were lots older settlers before me. It was a great change for me, as I was one of a large family; I was used to farm life, so I don't ever remember feeling lonely. I expect we were too busy; We lived in a one room log house 18 by 22, which we divided later as we got lumber. Still later we added on another piece. It had a shingled roof which lots had not. We got wood to cook and heat by. Water we carried from the well.

Our closest neighbor was Mr. Lemaire and his two sons. Mr. Lemaire and one of the boys were drowned crossing the river to go trapping. The other boy managed to get out on the ice. Joining us on the east was Mr. Sinclair, another veteran. He left soon after I got there. Charlie bought his land through the S.S.B. Further east lived Joe Smith and Mr. and Mrs. Todd. Mrs. Todd taught at Bezanson school. They soon left and Mr. and Mrs. Duchony bought the place.

To start with we either drove horses on a wagon or buggy or rode a horse; Several years later we bought a car.

We always had a good garden, and there was lots of wild fruit. We bought some cows and tried shipping cream. It had to go out to Westlock so by the time it got there it was sour. We got $1.00 for an 8 gallon can so we stopped that I made butter, which was a little better, but through the summer it only sold for 12½ cents lb. But money was scarce so we were glad for that. Then in the 1930s the money was shorter than ever, as grain prices were so poor. But we had our good times too with house parties in the winter. The Bredesons were good with the violin so we could have a dance.

By 1937 it was hard to get help. Charlie wasn't too well and had too much work to do. Vern Goff rented the farm and we sold everything on the farm. It is now owned by Hansen and McPhee. We went back a few times but after Charlie came out of the army after the 2nd war, we decided to make our home in Victoria, B.C. Charlie died suddenly Aug. 17, 1974.

There is so much one can say about the kind neighbors who help you when you start up in a new country. It would take a book to tell all the ups and downs of homesteading.

THOMAS WITHERLY — story by Marjorie (Witherly) Beale

Thomas Ebenezer Witherly was born April 16, 1842 and he married Alice Marie Campbell (born July 19, 1859) Aug. 5, 1877 at Aurthurette, New Brunswick. They had 6 children; Cora (1878), Ruby (1881), John (1885), Bill (1887), Tom (1892), and Ralph (1894).

They moved to Everett, Washington, U.S.A. in 1909 and their eldest son John went to Maine, U.S.A. In 1912 they moved to Vancouver, B.C. Cora (Mrs. Harry Sisson) remained in Everett.

They journeyed to Grande Prairie, Alta. in the spring of 1913 via Edmonton, Alta. and then on the Edson Trail by horse and covered wagon. They were 6 weeks on the trail covering a distance of 240 miles. They filed on 4 adjoining quarters in Glen Leslie district; — Thomas Ebenezer W. (S.W. 4-72-3-W6), Thomas Jr. W. (N.W. 4-72-3-W6), Bill W. (N.E. 5-72-3-W6), Ralph W. (N.W. 5-72-3-W6). On May, 1, 1915, Ralph and Bill hiked to Edmonton to join the army in the W.W.I. (1914-1918).

Ralph married Laura Winship April 5, 1916 in Edmonton.

Thomas Jr. W. left Glen Leslie, Alta. in 1918.

Alice M. Witherly (my grandmother) moved back to Everett, Wash., U.S.A. following her husband's death in 1917. He is buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery. She remained there until 1925 when she returned to live on Ralph's farm, in a house Ralph and Bill built for her. She died Dec. 14, 1941. She is buried beside her husband in the Glen Leslie Cemetery.

HENRY WHITHAM

Henry Whitham filed on N.E. Sec. 1-72-4 W6. After proving up he returned to Ontario.

Bill and Ella Van Wart were married in Calgary, Alta. in 1918. They along with their son Wendell lived in Glen Leslie, Alta. from 1929 to 1931, and later moved to Vancouver, B.C. in 1933.

Ruby married James Otto Patterson — they homesteaded (S.W. 5-72-3-W6) in 1914 in Glen Leslie. They had 3 sons; Arthur, Earl, and Neil. Otto passed away in 1944. He is buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery.

Ruby later married C. R. Webster. He is now deceased. Ruby lives in Swanhaven Nursing Home in Grande Prairie, Alta.

Cora died in 1930 and her ashes are buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery. Bill died in 1967.

RALPH WITHERLY STORY — by Marjorie (Witherly) Beale

Ralph was born in 1894 in Aurtherette, New Brunswick, son of Thomas and Alice Witherly. He came to Glen Leslie with his parents in 1913 and the next year he homesteaded (N.W. 5-72-3-W6). He farmed there until 1915 when he and brother Bill hiked to Edmonton to join the army.

In 1916 he married Laura Winship and later that month he sailed on the "Olympic" to go overseas. He was wounded and spent a year in Ireland. He returned to Glen Leslie (where Laura was living with his family) in April 1917. In 1919 he took a soldier's grant and got another quarter of land (N.W. 31-71-3-W6). They had 6 girls Evelyn (Mar. 2, 1918), Marjorie (Feb. 7, 1920), Constance (1922-Jan. 1) Alice and Doris — twins (Nov. 12, 1924) and Edith (Dec. 14, 1926). They lived on Ralph's homesteaded (N.W. 5-72-3-W6), and farmed. The children all went to school, first in the little old log Presbyterian Church, built in 1915, which was used for a school, and then to the new school (lumber) which was built a little way west of the church. In the school year 1930-1931 Evelyn went to school at the Bezanson Hall where high school was held (14 pupils — and the teacher was Miss Dorothy Goodland).

Ralph and Laura and family moved to Vancouver, B.C. in 1933. Now in 1976 Laura is living in White Rock, B.C. Ralph re-married and he and his wife Doris (Beale) live in Enderby, B.C.

Evelyn married Howard Shadwell and they live at Surrey, B.C.

I (Marjorie) married George Beale and we live at West Vancouver, B.C.

Alice married Fred Carkner, she is now deceased.

Doris married Jack Fink, she also is deceased.

Edith married Thomas Prodnuk and they live at Salt Lake City, U.S.A.

THE WITHERS BROTHERS

From a family of 6 boys and 4 girls, the three Withers brothers, Lawrence, Loui and Solan left Monnette, Missouri and headed for the Peace River country in 1912.

Lawrence (Shorty) walked the Edson Trail three times — 1912, 1913 and 1914. Other travellers were Steve Garrett, Peter Donahue, Loui Withers, Alec (Sandy) and Donald Cameron, Ross Wales, Bob Moon, Ed Leslie, Hugh and Fred Boyd. Lawrence improved on his brother Loui's homestead while Loui served in World War I. Of course, all the breaking was done with horses. All homesteaders had their own cosy log cabins. Since Lawrence was a carpenter by trade, he was able to work on projects such as Henry Dumas' house after the fire, the Army Barracks in Grande Prairie in 1939-1940, Grande Prairie's skating and curling rinks in 1946 besides three homes of his own. A log



Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Withers and grandchildren.

cabin was erected on his homestead in 1913. This was replaced by a frame house in 1930. Finally he built a modern new home in Grande Prairie in 1962.

Lawrence's wife, Lynna Howard, also from Monnett, had seven sisters and one brother. Lynna arrived at the homestead in the summer of 1918, and barely survived the flu epidemic.

One son, Richard, was born in 1919 in the old Grande Prairie log hospital. Another son, Howard, was born in 1922 in the log cabin on the homestead attended by Laddy (Dr. Turner) the local doctor.

Both sons got their schooling at Somme, Crystal Creek, Bezanson High and Grande Prairie High Schools. Lawrence, Lynna and Richard took one trip back home to Monnett in 1949.

Lynna Withers passed away Nov. 25, 1967 and Lawrence — Nov. 10, 1970. Both are buried in their hometown in Monnett, Missouri, U.S.A.

After schooling, son Richard helped with the farm, doing some grain trucking, trucking on the Alaska Highway, together with some railroad service but was forced to abandon this type of work due to poor health. In 1948, he completed a business course at St. Joe's and worked at the Treasury Branch Bank and the Donald Hotel. In 1952, he served as salesman for the Blue Ribbon Company for whom he still works.

Richard married Margaret Colwell, an R.N., from Vancouver, B.C. April 1954. He operated Dick's Grocery on 105 Avenue and 100 Street from 1956-1969. They have two children, Lynell born in 1955 and Donny in 1957.

After High School, Howard joined the Air Force 9/9/1941. He served as tail gunner (100 sqd. 1 group) 1 tour (32 German targets) and was discharged 27/9/45 to return to help with the farm. After working 1 year on road construction at Lethbridge and then on the Hart Highway, he purchased Bert Berry's half E½ 2-72-4 W6 and farmed with his father. He purchased a Ford truck and hauled gravel, lumber, coal and snow.



Lawrence Withers Homestead, 1920.

In 1951 Howard married Mary Donahue. Later in 1960 they built a home on their farm and raised their five children. Brian married Patricia Eagar and they reside in their home built on grandad's farm N.W. 2-72-4 W6 with their one son, Scott. Keith married Darlene Ray and lives in Grande Prairie with daughter Twyla. Irene married Maurice Ross of Grande Prairie. Neil and Cathy still live at home.

Loui Withers homesteaded in the Kleskun Lake area after coming over the Edson Trail in 1914. He served in World War I and then married Esther Graham. They had two sons Joe and Donald and three daughters, Doris, Mae and Grace. Loui passed away October 31, 1975 and is buried in the Grande Prairie Cemetery.

Solan Withers came over the Grouard Trail in 1915 and homesteaded west of Wembley in the Huallen area May 16. He returned to the United States in 1927.

The Withers were early pioneers into the area and shared many of the hardships that accompanied that pioneering. From a very poor light, a wick in muskrat oil known as a 'Bitch', they progressed to candles, then to coal oil lamps and lanterns; later, to the most important — the high test gas mantle lamp. Cooking was all done on wood stoves. The early log cabins had dirt floors and sod roofs. Food was plentiful, good gardens, milk, butter, cream, prairie chickens, ducks, berries, moose and deer. Since there was no electric power the meat was salted, smoked, dried or canned for the summer months.

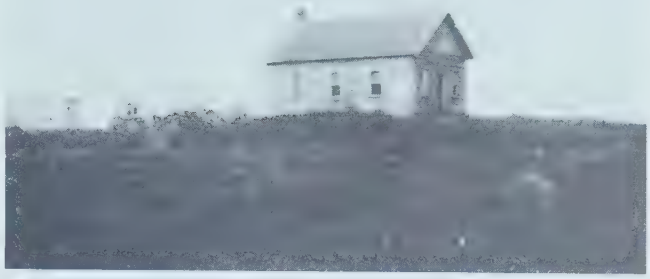
Winter work consisted of hauling the wood supply, fence posts, logs for additional buildings, ice for ice houses; and hauling grain to the elevators — all with sleighs.

JOHN ZIGLEMEIR

John Ziglemeir took over the Tony Brennan land in 1927. He was a bachelor, and didn't speak very good English. Jack Holton, our local auctioneer, had some fun with him at auction sales. John was short, and always stood in front at these sales. The auctioneer, when selling something, would point with his cane at John, and raise the bid himself. John would shake his head if he didn't want the bid raised, but sometimes he had things dropped on him that he didn't even want.

John farmed with horses. He used to clean his seed grain in the winter by putting some on the kitchen table and hand sorting it. In 1947 he sold out and left the country.

Schools



Somme School, built as church, 1915, used as school, 1919 to 1928.



Marion Morrison, 1972, first teacher at Somme, 1919.



Miss Morrison, teacher, first class, 1919 Somme.



Miss Keough, second teacher, Somme, 1920.



Miss Ethel Turner, third teacher, Somme School in 1921.



Second class, Somme School, 1919.



Somme School, last class, 1956.



New Somme School, 1928.

Churches

GLEN LESLIE CHURCH AND CEMETERY

On November 21, 1914, a meeting was held to consider building a church at Glen Leslie, on 10 acres



Glen Leslie Church, 1976.

allotted for a church and cemetery, in a survey made in 1910, on the southwest corner of Sec. 6-72-3 W6th. The decision was made to procure logs, in the winter months, to make a log church. Also, a subscription list was drawn, with cash donations and labor promised by all present. The building committee consisted of Dan Michin, Alex Milne, Lewis Fowler, Bruce Leslie and Norman Leslie.

By March, 1915, the logs were hauled and construction began soon after spring work. Alf Olson was in charge, with pay of $4.00 per day; his most able assistant being Nels Myres. Nick Altman made the chimney. The entire neighborhood helped and the job was completed in the autumn. Cost:

Building material from Cook & Boyd mill	$117.64
Nails, windows, etc., from Harold Peebles	46.73
Buffalo Lakes Co., flooring	55.40
Labor	248.23
Total cost of the 20 by 30 foot church	$468.00

The first church service was on Oct. 30, 1915, and continued until 1964. The church is still used on special occasions. It was renovated and reshingled in 1942 with spruce shingles (the original were pine) and again in 1976, with cedar. A cement foundation was laid in 1970.

The church was also used as a school from 1918 to 1928. The first teacher was Marion Morrison. She had seven pupils; I was one.

The first to be buried in the Glen Leslie cemetery was Mrs. Parker, in 1914. The county took over the cemetery in 1928, and surveyed the lots. Today, there are over 200 of our pioneers and their descendants, forever resting on the quiet, pastoral hillside. The graveyard is well kept and the church, with its original hand made pews, large church Bible, plus an added organ, has never been locked. And may it never be.

Clubs

JUST US CLUB — GLEN LESLIE DISTRICT — by Selma Girvan and Mary Withers

The 'Just Us' Club was started in the fall of 1961, when Mrs. Jennett Wales called the ladies of the district together. The first women to join the club were: Mrs. Charles (Jennett) Wales, Mrs. Ralph (Selma) Girvan, Mrs. Howard (Mary) Withers, Mrs. Rhinehart (Vira) Ladwig, Mrs. Elsworth (Ann) Kimble, Mrs. Bill (Betty) Nellis, Mrs. Earl (Vee) Dorscheid, Mrs. Alfred (Violet) Wales, Mrs. Ross (Annie) Wales, Mrs. Herbert (Jean) Kimble, Mrs. Herman (Louise) Kimble, Mrs. Jack (Bernice) Dorscheid, Mrs. Jack (Florence) Wales, Mrs. Ed (Mable) Bredeson and Mrs. Ray (Jean) Robideau.



Just us Club, quilting, 1975.

The first president of the club was Mrs. Jennett Wales. Mrs. Jean Kimble was secretary. These positions are changed every year. This year Mrs. Margaret Ladwig is president, and Mrs. Janice Dorscheid is secretary.

Through the years, the club has made lap robes, slippers and bibs for the auxiliary hospital in Grande Prairie. It helped place a wheelchair in the Grande Prairie Co-op store, quilted for the Red Cross and made quilts for burnt out families of the area or for raffles. Yearly donations are made to the Heart, Cancer and Crippled Children funds, as well as to the local 4-H Beef Club.

At Christmas, the members and their husbands, meet at a members' home to enjoy a turkey dinner, supplied by the members.

Nine of the original members are still active.

Miscellaneous Anecdotes

SAWMILLS ALONG THE WAPITI AND SMOKY RIVERS

Argonauts S.E. Sec. 15-71-3 W6 at the mouth of Muskeg Creek. 1911-1914.

Boyd and Cookes mill 1913-1914. N.W. 17-72-2 W6, near present bridge.

Shortreed and Rossers mill, N.E. 36-70-4 W6 on the Wapiti River. 1917-1919 near mouth of Bear River.

Ames mill N.W. 21-71-2 W6 near ferry on Smoky by Bezanson townsite.

John Parent mill S.E. 35-71-4 W6 1923-1926.

McLaughlins mill on Wapiti River, S.W. 26-70-4 W6, 1927-1930.

Moons mill S.E. 4-71-3 W6 on Wapiti River, 1934-1942.

Wales mill S.W. Sec. 1-71-4 W6, on Wapiti River.

Dorscheids mill S.E. 22-71-4 W6.

There is a story of the homesteader who built a house but had no glass for windows, so on his next trip to Edson he brought back a fragile package of glass. When unloading the freight at the door, he stumbled with the package of glass and broke it. On picking himself up, he said "Gee we were sure lucky to get it this far".

In the early homestead days everyone had roots to pick. One neighbor was telling everybody that he was making a root picker. About six months later a son was born to this family. He later turned out to be the self propelled root picker.

A WRITTEN RECORD OF EARLY PIONEERS AND PIONEERING LIFE AT GLEN LESLIE

As an intorduction and to do justice to those who contributed to the development of the first early communities and the pioneering way of life; let it be said that to those early pioneers we owe an everlasting debt of gratitude and also to their children who are still making their contribution at Glen Leslie, Alberta today.



Richard Kinnell and family at Homestead.

In endeavoring to remember and review and write up a Historical Record of the early settlers, events, the hardships, tragedies, sacrifices as well as the adventures and enjoyable times together, I find it really does tax ones' memory and ability.

I first feel that we should to some degree realize and appreciate the courage and resourcefulness of those early Pioneers.

I will try to list all the names of the families and individuals that come to mind of those early settlers who made up the Glen Leslie community east of Grande Prairie and enter their names near the end of this record.

Glen Leslie was named, as I remember, after Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Leslie, the parents of Edward and Norman Leslie who were early farmers of that area. A number of years later, a general store building was built at Glen Leslie for Mr. Morrison, a general store pioneer merchant who owned and operated a large general store in Grande Prairie. This new general store at Glen Leslie was a very necessary and needed improvement that served the early settlers for food and sundry needs of a growing community. Room was also set aside at the Glen Leslie store for a Post Office which provided communication with the outside world by mail. Mrs. Bryenton, with her two sons, operated the store for Mr. Morrison.

In recalling to memory the days of early pioneering, the thought comes to mind of the close ties of friendship between relatives, friends and neighbors. My father, Richard Kinnell Sr., related to his children, Inez, Richard and James, how he with a friend had visited the Peace River area sometime around the year of 1910. Mrs. Elmer Andress, my half sister, with her husband and family came to Grande Prairie around the year of 1912. They settled a short time later on a homestead in the Crystal Creek and Glen Leslie area.

My father Richard, or better known as Dick Kinnell, did not return to the Grande Prairie area with his three children until the approximate date of 1917 or 1918.

The Kinnell family of father and we three children, immigrated from a farm 3 miles east of Gagetown, Michigan, U.S.A., to a half sister Martha Andress's homestead residence 12 miles east of Grande Prairie in the Crystal Creek settlement for a short time. The Kinnell family, some few years later, took up and improved homestead land on mile east and one mile north of the Glen Leslie General Store and Post Office. Our family lived and farmed this home stead land until November 7, 1937, when all members returned to Michigan.

We three children, as well as most of our neighbors children, attended and received their education at Somme School, Dist No. 3634.

Many of the log house dwellings, were built by neighborhood men of several in number called Building Bees, whenever there was a need for a new home. The children attending Somme School, in the early days, walked to school and others rode horses when severe winter weather set in, or because of the distance from their homes and the school. The children of the higher school grades and age generally did the janitor work which included sweeping, dusting, cleaning blackboards and building fires to heat the schools classrooms. Keeping a supply of heater firewood was also part of the school janitor duties for which they were paid $5.00 per month during winter months. The schools supply of drinking water was carried from Higby's well, a distance of ½ mile north of the school premises in a twelve or fourteen quart galvanized pail. Higby's well was a hand shovel dug spring fed well with wood plank cribbing. Richard and

James Kinnell carried the schools supply of drinking water for 50 cents a month. Students doing the janitor work during these early pioneer days were Arthur Patterson, Alfred Wales, Charles Wales, Richard and James Kinnell. Snow was melted on a large heater stove in the schoolroom during winter months to provide drinking water for the school children.

As far as I can recall, these were the first teachers to teach at Somme School; Miss Marion Morrison, Miss Keough, Miss Turner, Mrs. Leslie, Miss Cannal, Mr. Guttierez.

Pictures of Interest



Golden Wedding Anniversary, L. to R.: Edwin, Alfred, Margaret and Mabel Bredeson, 1977.



L. to R. Mr. and Mrs. Norman Moon, Mr. and Mrs. Ross Wales, Mr. and Mrs. Ira McLaughlin, Mr. and Mrs. Rex Patterson.



Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Moon's 50th Wedding Anniversary.



Ross and Anna Wales, Golden Wedding Anniversary, 1972.



Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Bredeson, 50th wedding anniversary, 1977.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA CANADA

1905 1955

GOLDEN JUBILEE SENIOR CITIZEN AWARD

To all to whom these presents shall come:

Know Ye That the People of Alberta have always recognized and been truly appreciative of the Valuable Contribution made to the Development of the Province by the Pioneers and Senior Citizens thereof, and That

Anna Wales

Having been a Resident of Alberta during or before the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Five and now residing during the Celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Alberta in the Province of Alberta, is hereby awarded the Golden Jubilee Senior Citizen Award of the Province of Alberta. In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Fifty Five, for and on behalf of the People of Alberta.

Premier of Alberta

Provincial Secretary

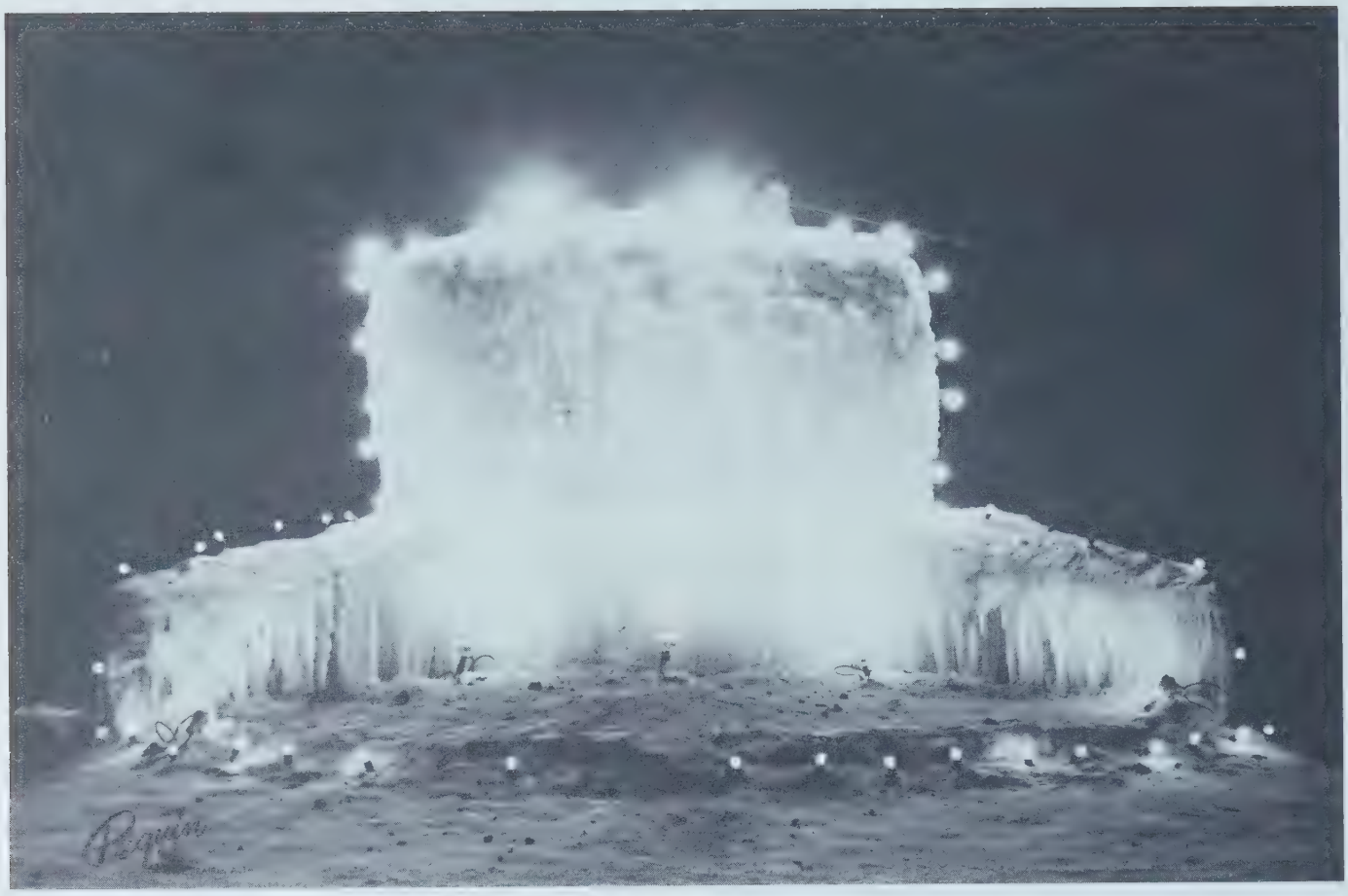




NORTH CELEBRATION—Sunday church services wound up Grande Prairie's mammoth celebration as a city. Residents had staged many events to officially mark the rise of the northern centre to adulthood. Pictured at top are old-timers of the district. They are: Alex Stewart, of Edmonton, who spoke for the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce; A. M. Bezanson, a northern pioneer after whom the village of Bezanson is named; J. O. Patterson, of Grande Prairie; David Ritchie, Edmonton, a former northerner and William Grant, a veteran of the north. Mr. Bezanson was visiting from Vancouver where he is living in retirement. Also pictured is Queen Marilyn Wales.



Somme School girl, Marilyn Wales, First city Queen of Grande Prairie, 1958.



1958 City Queen Ice Palace.



Lake Saskatoon, 1910.



Charles Wales' Farm.



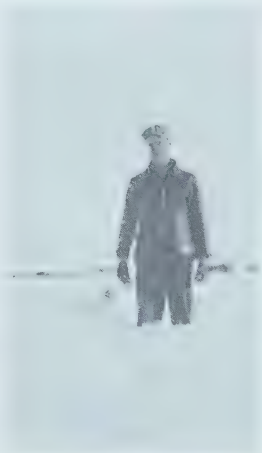
Glen Leslie Store, 1951.



George Hansen and Marvin Jensen.



Snow on Aug. 15, 1951 at G. Thompsons.



Snow on Sept. 15, 1936.



Lawrence Withers turkeys.



Robert Dryer, Peter Donahue, John Purvus, John Dryer and Bill Dryer.



Laurie Thompson before Grande Prairie County Fair 1970.



Farm Power, 1948 at G. Thompsons.



Mr. Bert Berry.



Alfred Wales hauling grain, 1935.



Company grain cleaner with operator G. Thompson.



Hazel Patterson, Mrs. Osier and Jack Osier.



Ross Wales, 50 years, A. Masson. L. to R.: D. W. Patterson, Jimmie Oliver, Ross Wales, Norman Leslie.



Robert Moon holding reins of Alf Wales' Purebreed Percheron team, weighing 2110 and 2140 pounds.



Les Christie's family and others.



Marion and Mrs. K. Morrison, Ed and Dorothy Leslie and children, Bill, Tom and Marion.



Wales Bros. logging on Wapiti, 1935 with Richard Kinnell and Arnold Dryer.



Mr. Leroux with trained coyote, 1928.



Bob McPhee and Don Stark putting up hay.



Mrs. Gordon Thompson and sister (Sherwood Park).



Violet (Thompson) and Alf Neilson (Sherwood Park).



Ken Morrison, Ed Leslie and Rex Patterson families, 1930.



Arnold Dryer, Earl Dorshied and Charles Dorshied. Enlisting Day.



First Post Office in Glen Leslie.



Opening of the New Smoky River Bridge, Aug. 17, 1949.



Hauling ice for summer use at the G. Thompson farm, 1954.



Smoky River trapper, Nemo Sackett.



Nat Hunter and friends.



Kleskun Lake Mosquito.



Arthur Patterson, the hunter.



Myrtle, Mildred and Dina Jensen with Bill Gutierrey and Fred Moon.

Tranquility



Family Histories

ROBERT AND MONTY ARNOLD FAMILY

Robert and Alma Arnold purchased 800 acres of farm land in the old Tranquility District from John Wohlgemuth in 1974. The previous owner was Vern Sorenson. On one quarter of the land still sits the old Fitzimmons Post Office, now in quite a state of disrepair.

Robert's son, Monty, his wife, Eve, and daughter, Ranie, became Landed Immigrants on January 21, 1974 at Coutts, Alberta. They occupied the farm until Robert and Alma were ready to move. When they arrived at the farm, 3 miles southeast of Teepee Creek, there were 4 feet of snow on the ground. Within a few days the temperature turned to 50 degrees below zero, and they ended up with frozen water pipes.

The Arnolds all came from Bozeman, Gallatin County, Montana, where they were born and raised.

Robert arrived in May, 1974, helped put the first crop in, then headed south again for more of his belongings. Among some of the pieces he brought with him was an old 15-30 McCormick-Deering rubber-tired tractor with table and saw attached to the front. It sawed many a truck load of wood. He, also, brought a RD4 Caterpillar made in 1935 and a 1945 Dodge grain truck. Both get plenty of use. Robert brought his Belgian work mares, two stud colts, three saddle horses, and one Percheron-Belgian stud plus two wagons and numerous pieces of harness. The work horses were sold on September 29, 1975 at the Grande Prairie Auction Mart.

The big event that happened for Monty and Eve since they came to Canada was the arrival of their son, Thomas. He was born September 15, 1975, the day before dad's birthday.

BREEMER FAMILY — P. Breemer,

We arrived in the Teepee Creek district in the spring of 1957, from Southern Alberta. "We" included my parents, John and Hilda Breemer, Mickey, my wife, and our 2 children, Rose, 2 years old and Johnny, 3 months. Except for our children, we were all born in Holland.

We had purchased 5 quarters of land from George Robinson. These were the N.E. 19-73-3-6, N.½ 20-73-3-6, N.E. 7-73-3-6, and S.E. 18-73-3-6.

My parents lived in the log house built by George Robinson. We remodelled the old Tranquility School

house moved onto the place by the former owner. We lived in it until we moved to Grande Prairie in 1972. My mother passed away in 1963 and was buried in the Teepee Creek Cemetery. Dad retired in 1966 after we sold 2 quarters of our land to Miles Marcy from Grande Prairie. Dad is still living in Grande Prairie and is 83 years old now.

We drilled our good flowing hard water well in 1959. We sold construction-sand for quite a number of years, as well as doing mixed farming. During the first years we depended entirely on wood for fuel. Later on we switched to propane and oil.

All of our children started school in Teepee Creek. We had 2 more daughters since our arrival in 1957. Judy was born in 1958 and Patricia in 1963. Being involved in their school activities provided us with lots of entertainment.

Rose, John and Judy are presently attending University in Edmonton and Patricia is going to Harry Balfour School. After living in Grande Prairie for 4 years we again went back to the farm. We purchased ½ section of land 5 miles East of Clairmont and have been living there for the past 2 months.

HENRY CALLIOU — as told by Louise Calliou

My dad, Henry G. Calliou, was born April 5, 1889 at Stoney Plain and his parents were Mr. and Mrs. Louis Calliou. Dad came with his parents to where Grande Prairie now is (before the Edson Trail) in 1896. It was late in the fall of the year, so they had to stay at Grouard for the winter on account of feed for their horses and a few head of cattle. They then continued their trip the following spring to Grande Prairie. Pete, Henry, Louie and Joe were left behind in Grouard Mission to attend school, and it wasn't until later that they joined their parents.

Dad met Mother at Spirit River, but her home was at Peace River. Her father was a Chief of the Duncan Band Reservation. His name was Duncan Testawich and my mother's first name was Lucy. Dad and Mother were married in 1908 and began their new life homesteading at Five Mile Creek. Dad hauled freight from Edson to Lake Saskatoon for the Hudson Bay Company.

In the early twenties, he used to go out to railroad tie camps at Buffalo Lakes, Athabasca and Smith. He received 7 cents a piece for the ties. "You would have to swing the broad axe pretty steady in order to make 85 to 90 ties per day and have to be in good lumber area," Dad said.

Henry and Lucy had seven children, Louise, Julia, Mary, Virginia, Malcolm, Alberta and John. They moved to Kleskun Lake in 1928.

Julia married Ted Knott and lives at Brownvale. They have 12 children and one great-grandchild.

Mary and Dan Gouchie were married in April, 1934 and have two girls. Dad died two years ago. Since 1942 they have lived at Fort St. John.

Virginia and John Testwich were married in 1938. They live at Brownvale and have two adopted boys.

Albert passed away in the early thirties.

In the hungry thirties, Dad would take a load of wheat to Sexsmith flour mill for the yearly supply of flour, bran and shorts, also cream of wheat. Mother always had a big garden. She also had a team of ponies, one old faithful was a blue horse named Fly, and a light wagon which she would use to go and pick wild fruit. Blueberries, raspberries, saskatoons and the chokecherries that were made into syrup for pancakes. She'd drive down to the Broke Banks (Three Rivers) and camp two or three days, picking berries. There were bears down there, too. She'd take some of us along to help pick berries and we were afraid of bears. Mother wasn't and she always had a gun along.

Mother used to tan moose hides and make moccasins for sale at 75 cents a large pair, 35 cents for children's size. She made gloves and mitts, and well beaded moose hide jackets for $15.

Dad used to play the violin. We had dances at Tom Rices, Fred Vinets, Fitzsimmons School and at our house. Stet Foore used to call the square dances. People gathered at the dances, had a good time and a lot of fun.

Virginia and I decided we wanted to trap some weasels when we lived at Kleskun Lake. The grass was tall, the snow having bent it over leaving weasel runs underneath. We set a few traps out, not too far apart, and the next day we went to check the traps. Someone had set more traps in between ours, so Virginia wrote in the snow "pretty small". I went to check the traps the next day and the extra traps were gone with a note in the snow saying "not so small".

Our parents moved to Paddle Prairie late in the fall of 1943 and got a half section of land on the Metis Colony and farmed there until 1956. They retired and came to Brownvale. Mother passed away in January, 1957 and Dad passed away September 21, 1967. John lives at Keg River, I live in Grande Prairie, and my son, Malcolm, in Edmonton.

MALCOLM CALLIOU

Malcolm was born in Grande Prairie on April 5, 1918 and attended the East Kleskun, Tranquility and Fitzsimmons rural schools before joining the Canadian Army in the spring of 1942. He was stationed at Brandon, Manitoba. While in training there, he was injured and then discharged from the Army late in the fall of 1942. Malcolm served as fire and camp inspector with the United States Army on the Alaskan Highway. He also worked on a number of construction crews in Peace River, Dunvegan, Valleyview, Brownvale, Taylor Flats, Fort St. James, Fort Nelson, and Vanderhoof, B.C. His various jobs took him to Yellowknife and Pine Point to work on a diamond drilling outfit and with a geological party at Machwa Lake and other remote areas.

Malcolm passed away in February 11, 1960 at Watson Lake in the Yukon.

MIKE AND ALICE CIEZKI — as told by Helen Gobin

When my grandfather, John Ciezki, came to Canada from Poland, he settled in Webster, Alberta. My dad, who could not speak a word of English, came to Canada at 17 years of age, several years after grandfather. Grandfather intended to bring the whole family over, but the war broke out. The family consisted of my dad, Mike, a sister who died earlier, two brothers who are still in Poland, two sisters and a brother who came much later and now live in Edmonton, and

grandmother who came later and lived with one of her daughters in Edmonton.

Grandfather was very strict. I can remember Dad telling us he had made three hundred dollars. He gave this money to his dad. He asked his dad for 35 cents to go to a dance and his dad refused to give him this money. They were to save money to send to the rest of the family, who at this time were still in Poland.

Dad worked very hard as did grandfather. My dad has never gone back to Poland even for a visit.

My mother, Alice Sask, was born in Saskatchewan. Mom and Dad were married in the year 1936, and they lived with Grandpa Ciezki. Grandpa thought Dad should have married a Polish girl.

I was born in Webster, Alberta, as was my brother Richard. There was a midwife in the district and she was called when it came time to deliver a baby. Her only means of transportation was a horse and buggy or team of horses and wagon.

Mother and Dad had moved and they were renting a little farm in the Tranquility District from John Edwards. My sister Emily was born there and later Betty. They had a one room house, four kids and everything was kept spotless. I wonder at times how Mom ever did all this. She didn't have any of the modern appliances that I have. Everything was done by hand.

My parents moved closer to the school (to the Teepee Creek area) where Dad rented the Ed Grant farm from 1944 until 1951. We attended the Tranquility School for six years. It was only a one room school with grades one to nine.

Adele and Johnny were born in the maternity hospital in Sexsmith. Johnny was just a baby in 1950 when our home was destroyed by fire. There was such a wind that day. Mom and Dad had gone to Sexsmith shopping, so Grandfather was at home with all of us children. He was the one who noticed the fire first. He said, "I smell smoke." If it hadn't been for him, we may have lost our lives. On their way home, Mom and Dad could see this big ball of fire. Mom said, "It's our house!" I guess she repeated this many times. The roads were terrible and it seemed that Dad just couldn't get home fast enough. When they got home and saw all the empty beds, Dad fainted. The first thing Mother asked me was "Are all the kids here?" It gave me an awful feeling — What if they weren't all there?

Since there was still a chicken house with a heater in it, we made a fire in there because it was cold. The fire was in the early part of spring. Everyone in the surrounding districts was very kind and helpful, taking a couple of the kids here and there. An old house had to be repaired for us in which to live. There were so many things which could never be replaced, but Mom and Dad were so thankful because no life was lost in that awful fire.

Later we moved to the North Kleskun District on the Alex Shand place. Mr. Adair was our teacher there. He was very strict. I can remember crying the first day I was in school. I was sad to see him leave because I learned more from him it seemed. Mrs. Adair helped with the Christmas concert and the Christmas carols. We also could choose any song to sing while they were getting ready for the next play. The song I chose was "Don't Be Ashamed of Mother".

At the North Kleskun School, there were five Ciezkis and two other pupils. Johnny was only five when he started school. We had a mile to walk. Johnny sat down in the middle of the road, saying he was tired. He just sat there until I finally carried him home from school. What I should have done was got myself a paddle stick and used it on him. I was tired when we got home.

Brother Ted was born in Sexsmith, where he later attended St. Mary's School, to which the children were then being bussed. Last but not least was brother Tom, who was born in Grande Prairie, and is the baby of the family. He is eighteen years old now. You might say I was chief cook and bottle washer at home, being the oldest.

Mom and Dad bought a farm right across from the Alex Shand place. They built the house themselves. It was a three bedroom house with a large livingroom and lots of cupboard space in the kitchen. Mom, also, had many plants. She called them her babies because she paid so much attention to them all. She had dahlias, a bleeding heart, Star of Bethlehem, geraniums and dozens of others. She seemed to have so much patience with them. The kids were growing up, leaving home one by one, so she had a little more spare time on her hands.

Dad drove the grader and snow plow for the County of Grande Prairie for nine years.

I entered the convent when I was seventeen. Mother and Dad were very sad when I was leaving, but this is what I had made up my mind to do. Two of us girls entered together and the training was very good. I had my hair cut short before I left, and can remember getting heck for looking in the mirror from Sister Superior, who had just walked into the room. You had seven years to decide, and were told if you couldn't make up your mind in seven years, then you could never make up your mind.

Grandfather died in the early 60's and grandmother passed on several years later.

I married Maurice Gobin from St. Claude, Manitoba. He is the building inspector for the city of Grande Prairie. We have four children; Michael, Teddy, Allison and Arlene.

Richard married Edith Williums from Red Deer area. He is the manager for the Royal Bank in Calgary and they have two sons, Ricky and Michael.

Emily married Pete Kabatoff from Calgary. He is Leafe manager for Shaganappi Motors in Calgary and they have two boys, Greg and Darcy.

Betty is married to Jim Unger who is General Manager for Gendall's Mobile Home Indusry in Edmonton. They have two children, Marilyn and Darin.

Adele is married to John Unger, who is a policeman in Vancouver. They have two children, Darall and Jody.

John married Marie Kulitski from Webster. John is the manager for the A.M.A. in Grande Prairie.

Ted married Carrie Mosenko from Sexsmith. They are now living in Vancouver, B.C.

Tom is living in Vancouver, B.C. with Mom and

Dad. He took his grade twelve there, and is very active in sports.

Mom and Dad have twelve grandchildren. They celebrated their 40th Wedding Anniversary on the 25th of November, 1976. All the "kids" (as Mom and Dad would put it) and all their granchildren were present for this happy occasion.

MY FOUR YEARS IN TRANQUILITY SCHOOL — by Dora M. Doyle

What mostly attracted me to the Tranquility School District in the first place was its fascinating name. I visualized a haven tucked away in a shady dell. Here I would find serenity and inspiration to work harmoniously at the job I love with the people I love. Imagine my dismay when I beheld an unpainted, weather-beaten, little building standing lonely in a bleak field with not a single tree to shade it. The only redeeming feature was a happy little brook that babbled its way nearby. Yet somehow the little school, looking so apologetic and humble, made me want to hug it to my heart and I felt a warm glow all over. I whispered to myself, "Before I leave you'll be transformed and will sit with pride in your shady dell proudly displaying a new coat of paint and everyone will come to look at you." Such were the dreams, in those days, of young inexperienced teachers!

To add to my first shock and disillusionment, Mr. George Robinson, the school district secretary who later became my very good friend and wise counselor, informed me that when the question of a name for the school arose he satirically suggested Tranquility and Tranquility it became. In spite of George's foreboding, tranquil it was and tranquil it remained during my four years there from 1934 to 1937.

I was very fortunate indeed to have had such an understanding sympathetic school board. The chairman, Mr. Ed Grant, and his dear wife, Florence, became my close friends and remained so all through the years. Looking back on it now, that school board gave me the confidence and assurance I so badly needed.

The enrollment was small but the quality compensated for the lack of numbers. Glancing over an inspector's report dated November 8, 1937, I see there was 1 pupil in grade 1, 2 in grade 2, 2 in grade 3, 3 in grade 4, and 4 in grade 6. We were a very informal little group and learned to know each other very well. I also see a comment on this report that is worthy of note. Quote: — "There are several pupils in this room who show exceptional ability." This proved to be very true.

I kept a diary during my last year in Tranquility. Unfortunately, it deals chiefly with my social life. It was a very brisk one, with never a dull moment. How could it have been otherwise with the Sorken and Pronovost clans so close at hand. Apart from the social whirl, I did notice a few items of interest pertaining to my work. On January 14th audiovisual equipment was introduced into the school for the first time. It was great for the students. They saw and learned many things that they would not have otherwise. As for myself, from then on that travelling projector seemed to hang around my neck like an albatross. I was either trying to obtain it, return it or raise money to pay for the renting of it. To raise funds we put on a series of whist drives. The average intake was $6.75.

I noted also that I taught on Easter Monday and all Easter week in order to get in 200 teaching days. This was the number necessary to get the full government grant. I discovered later that it was only the teachers in the one-roomed country schools who were so conscientious about this matter.

I read that May 17th was a Red Letter Day in my life. John Grant won a medal for elocution at the Grande Prairie Music and Drama Festival. Norma Talbot came 4th. This was out of 40 or more competitors. Norma is still on her toes. It was she who tracked me down and said get busy.

At the track meet in Sexsmith we won two seconds and three thirds. Would have done much better had not our top athlete slipped away for the day and didn't return until we were ready to depart for home. The wonders of Sexsmith meant more to him than running and jumping in the dust and heat.

Money was very scarce. My annual salary that last year was $650.00. To supplement my income I did the janitor work. I can't remember what the remuneration was for that. By the time I paid my railroad fare and $20.00 a month for board, I didn't have much left for frivolities. I remember a fast talking salesman persuaded me to buy a set of encyclopedia that I couldn't afford. It was $14.50 down and $3.00 every month for 15 months. That, too, was an albatross around my neck and dragged on forever. To add insult unto injury, the encyclopedia was no good.

This would not be complete without mention of the good people who gave me bed and board, Stella and Ed Martin. Stella was a splendid cook so I lived on the fat of the land. Ed was full of jokes and fun so I never had the opportunity to get depressed or lonely.

Finally, it came time for me to leave Tranquility and say goodbye to my students and all my good friends. Mr. Walker, my inspector, decided I should have experience in a larger school so I was transferred to Equity where I had 45 pupils, grades one to nine inclusive. Mr. Walker had more faith in me than I had in myself.

The little school still stood as I first saw it. Unpainted, weather-beaten and lonely in the same bleak field with not a tree to shade it. As I closed the door for the last time and glanced back I could almost sense a look of reproach.

JOHN EDWARDS

John was born in Wales. As a young man he worked in England on a dairy farm and then immigrated to Canada in 1927 as a farm worker. He went to work for Nina and Norman Talbot at Dimsdale, and when they moved to Kleskun Lake, John went too. Wanting to be a full fledged farmer, he started buying horses, among them one bay mare he named Bell. She bucked him off, breaking his ankle, which left him with a limp.

John was able to buy a quarter of land a mile south of Talbot's from John Donlon, formerly homesteaded by George Robinson. Later he was able to buy more land in the Fitzsimmons, East Kleskun area. He was now a full fledged farmer with horses and machinery. He enjoyed shearing sheep and every year after



John Edwards ploughing at the Norman Talbot farm.

spring's work would make the rounds doing neighbors' sheep. John always said it was his holiday and he enjoyed getting away from his own cooking.

In October, 1952 (25 years ago), John disappeared. The R.C.M.P. organized a search and many friends and neighbors walked so far apart all through the area of his farm. Some of his horses were left in the barn and the binder was left in the field. Many rumors spread that he was working on the Great Lakes, living in Saskatchewan, gone to Manitoba, staying out in Edmonton, or had met with foul play. To our knowledge at this time he has not been contacted.

BILL FITZPATRICK, JR. — Bill Fitzpatrick, Jr.

Mr. Stan Hambly, Superintendent of Schools for the County, asked me to supervise correspondence lessons for the students at the Tranquility School during the term 1949-1950. I biked or rode a horse from home until winter set in, then boarded with the Nelsons. Later on, Dora was expecting a baby, so I stayed with George Robinson's until spring. There were 10-12 students in grades 1-8. We had a Christmas concert and exchanged gifts in the old tradition of one room country schools. Everyone was very neighborly, inviting me to Sunday dinners and rides to town. It was a long time ago but I remember most of the family names of the students: Ciezki, Klimach, Nelson, Simpkins, Sorken and Sorenson. To all of them and others in the district — hello and best wishes.

FRED FOWLER

Fred was born at Saratoga Springs, within half a mile of the Saratoga Race Track. Annabel Fowler was born in East Galoway, New York. They moved to Kansas in about 1914 and later to Oklahoma where father and sons worked for Bainsdale Oil Company for two years.

Six sons and one daughter were born to this union in the United States. After they moved to Canada, another daughter was born at Stoney Plain.

Hearing about the cheap and good farming land in Canada, they decided it would be a good place to start with all their boys. They got together seven covered wagons, one being the chuck wagon which was drawn by a pair of mules. They started out with 30 horses. They remember going through Batesville, Arkansas when peace was declared in 1918. They also went through a terrible cyclone at Mitchell, South Dakota. They were held up six weeks at the border. They all dug in and helped at harvest time.



On the road between Arkansas and Canada.

Being too late to proceed further by wagon train, they loaded onto freight cars. Here they met the Leon Martin family, whose cars were on the same train. Fowlers arrived in Edmonton on Thanksgiving Day in 1923. They lived in Edmonton for 1½ years then took up a farm at Coronation. They were again with covered wagons when they arrived in Coronation. After being dried out year after year, they decided to try the Peace River country and again joined the Martins. The government was giving free cars to the farmers to move their possessions and they also moved about 50 head of horses and cattle to Kleskun Lake in 1932.

In 1935 Fred and Annabel moved to Wanham where they rented a farm from Jack Lampert for four years. Then they took up their land at Belloy.

They retired to Vancouver in the fall of 1942 where they lived until they passed away. There is still one son at Wanham, two in the States and the rest of the family is in B.C.

ED GRANT — by Florence Grant

Edward James Grant was born in Grand Forks, North Dakota, on February 14, 1896. When he was a small boy the family moved to Montana (near Kalispell), then on to Lewiston, Idaho, back to Helena and Shelby, Montana, on to Medicine Hat, Alberta, and eventually settled in Leader, Saskatchewan. There his father operated a livery barn, also a farm, and later the Leader Hotel.

During World War I, Ed served in the United States Army (319th Engineers) from 1917 to 1919.

Returning to Saskatchewan after the war, he joined two friends who were bound for the Cariboo country of British Columbia. While he was in B.C., he worked at various jobs: driving stage, logging and road building. Prince George was but a small town then. In 1923 he returned to Leader where he operated his father's farm and also worked in the hotel.

It was then he decided to try his luck in the much-publicized Peace River country of Alberta. He arrived in Sexsmith in the fall of 1926 with a carload of farm machinery and several horses including his favorite saddle horse 'Happy'. The winter was spent at the South Camp of Kleskun Ranch, located near the south side of Kleskun Lake.

A few months later he was joined by his father, John H. Grant, who had by then sold the Leader Hotel.

It was at this time that the Kleskun Ranch Company was going out of the cattle raising business and selling land and equipment. Ed and his father bought what was referred to as 'The Home Ranch' from the Kleskun Ranch Company. This consisted of three quarters of land: the South ½ of Section 30 and the Northwest ¼ of Section 19, 73-3-W6th, located East of Kleskun Lake. This had been the headquarters of Kleskun Ranch Company. The N.W.¼ of Section 19 had been homesteaded by Louis Fuhrman, and the South ½ of Section 30 had been homesteaded by his uncles, Dan and Lewis Gulick, and had been purchased by Kleskun Ranch Company.

Ed and I (then Florence Wendt) had met when we were both attending high school in Kalispell, Montana, which was my home. Soon afterward Ed left to join the Army and I went on to Normal School at Cheney, Washington, and at Dillon, Montana, after which I taught school in Montana. Later I took a business course and worked as a secretary for the Department of Labor & Industries in Spokane, Washington, and in the Prosecuting Attorney's office in Davenport, Washington. We were married at Kalispell, Montana, on January 24, 1928, and returned to the ranch to make our home which Ed had already established there.

A short time later that year Ed's brother, Ken, came to make his home with us. Both Ed and his father had filed on homesteads in the north Teepee Creek region. These were developed and improved. It was there that Ken and his father made their home after 1932.



Ed and Florence Grant with Pinto and Snowball, April, 1928.

Much of the land at Kleskun Ranch was still not under cultivation so there was clearing and breaking to be done. For a few years they also farmed other land still owned by Kleskun Ranch Company. That portion to the south was later purchased by Norman Talbot and that to the west by Ed Martin and his father, Leon Martin. Our neighbor to the east was George Robinson, who later moved to Sexsmith. V. H. Leyland (known as Sunny) homesteaded the quarter just north of us.



Ed Grant's cousin, Mary Uedrine with Ruby (Thomas) Fink driving Jack and Jennie.

In late September, 1928, a fire which had started on Kleskun Lake spread east to the ranch and burnt several stacks of hay and a granary full of oats which was a considerable loss.

In the fall of 1927, they had bought a new threshing outfit and in the following years threshed not only their own crop but also that of neighbors.

While on the ranch the Grants engaged in farming, raising hogs, cattle and horses. The place was well-suited for this purpose. There were many buildings, including a ranch-style house, a log house nearby, bunkhouse, large barn, granaries, chop-house, and many other sheds, corrals, etc. The large "red" granary east of the house had a good floor and dances were often held there, since there was no community hall near at that time.

The building site had been well chosen on the north side of Kleskun Creek, which flowed through the place. There were four flowing wells (the wells had been drilled by Carl Foster). These wells provided a plentiful supply of good water which proved a valuable asset. In later years neighbors hauled water from these wells for household use and sometimes even for their livestock. There was also a drilled, flowing well on the N.W.¼ of Section 19.

Life at the ranch was interesting and exciting. Each season brought its own type of activity. In the late winter and early spring there was the problem of "breaking" the young horses. Some of these were kept to be used in farming operations, others not needed were sold. During the 30's many were traded for lumber. Since many young farmers were just getting started on farms, there was always a demand for good horses.

Spring work (seeding) on the farm followed, usually from April 15th to late May followed by summerfallowing, breaking of new land, haying and by this time harvesting of grain. Since there were no combines at this time the crops were harvested with a binder and later threshed.

After threshing was finished there was grain to be hauled into elevator in Sexsmith. In early years this was done by sleigh with horses. Later this was done by truck.

We burned wood in the kitchen range as well as in several heaters and a good supply was needed each



Harvesting on Kleskun Lake in 1933, Ed on tractor.

year. This was hauled from the "bush" several miles away and sawed into stove length by buzz saw.

There was a flour mill in Sexsmith operated by L. Warren and in the fall a load of wheat was hauled to the flour mill and exchanged for flour, our year's supply. Ice was cut on the Smokey River and stored in the ice-house to be used in the icebox in the summer months. We had no electricity on the farm at this time, but later with rural electrification we used a refrigerator, and of course, other electrical appliances.

In 1942 we bought a half section of land from John H. Jones, who had retired from farming and moved to Vancouver, B.C. This land is now owned by Wayne Gaboury.

Ed was always deeply interested in the affairs of the community and took an active part. He served on the local school board, on Municipal Council for many years and later on County Council, on Advisory Board of VLA following World War II, on Executive of County Agricultural Society and as President of the Teepee Creek Stampede Association.

In 1944, due to failing health, Ed retired from active farming and sold the farm machinery and horses at auction sale. The cattle had been shipped and sold previously. We moved to Grande Prairie; two years later to Chilliwack, B.C., remained there for four years, then returned to Grande Prairie.



Hauling with grain tank Kleskun Ranch, 1928.

In the early 1970's a representative of Hudson's Bay Company arrived in Sexsmith with the purpose of finding the exact location of a former Hudson's Bay Co. post which had been situated on the Southwest ¼ of Section 30, 73-3-W. 6th M. (on Kleskun Ranch). It was suggested to him that he contact George Robinson (then living in Sexsmith), who was familiar with that area. They drove out to the farm, searched and found the exact site of the building a short distance east of the Sandridge and near the south side of Kleskun Creek. The post had been destroyed by fire.

Our family consisted of five children — James, John, Kathleen, Dolores (who died in infancy) and Dennis. All attended Tranquility School and later St. Joseph's High School in Grande Prairie. Jimmy (now Lt. Col. E. J. Grant) is with the Canadian Armed Forces (Winnipeg). Johnny, for many years a pilot with R.C.A.F., is now with the Ministry of Transport, Ottawa. Kay is now Mrs. Ernest Nagy of Edmonton — (she was formerly employed as a secretary in the office of the late Mr. D. W. Patterson and in the Magistrate's Office in G.P.). Dennis, who resides in Grande Prairie, is Superintendent of Schools (Grande Prairie RCS Dist. No. 28).

Ed passed away in Grande Prairie on April 16, 1960, after a lingering illness. I continue to make my home in Grande Prairie.

DAN AND ELIZABETH GULICK

In the spring of 1911, Dan and Elizabeth Gulick, son John age 10, daughter Bertha age 12, Louis Gulick, Dan's father, Mart Garry, Elizabeth's brother and Louis Furnham left Billings Montana with a herd of 85 loose horses, four purebred stallions and covered wagons holding all their belongings for their long trip north to the Peace River country. The menfolk had



Dan and Elizabeth Gulick.



Dan and Elizabeth Gulick on the trail.



visited the Peace earlier and liked the large hay meadows and the abundance of rich fur bearing animals.

The horses were trail herded to Medicine Hat, Alberta, where wagons, horses and all were loaded on railway box cars and shipped to Edmonton, then on to Edson. From Edson they were once again trail herded to Kleskun Lake.

Grandpa Louis Gulick, an elderly man, drove his own team of mules and wagon, using his trunk for a seat. The trail from Edson had many pot holes and sloughs as it had rained steadily for 30 days. Grandpa Louis' mules were in frequent disgrace by getting stuck. Johnny and Bertha (now seasoned trail riders as they had ridden their horses all the way) would gleefully give Grandpa a pull with lariat ropes fastened to their saddle horns.

Upon arriving at Kleskun Lake, Louis Gulick filed on S.E. 30-T73-R3. Dan filed on S.W. 30-T73-R3 on October 22 and 23, 1912. Louis Furham filed the following June 14, 1913 on N.W. 19-T73-R3.

Mrs. Gulick was a very able horsewoman and took part in all the local sports, Clairmont and Grande Prairie being amongst the largest. She won many of the ladies races. There was one story of her dressing as a man and winning that race also. Dan entered the relay races. Frank Turner was his horse holder.

In the winter time, they freighted supplies from Grouard with four ups.

Bertha met a bronc rider, horse dealer, livery barn owner, and on June 25, 1917 she married Bert Sales. They had two daughters, Leona and Geraldine, and one son Lenard.

The Kleskun Lake Cattle Company bought out Dan and Elizabeth (Louis had gone back to Comptons where he later died). They decided to go back to Montana where they invested money in a ranch, but the call of the Peace was too strong. In 1919 they returned to Kakut Lake (Kadot) near Wanham where they ranched, trapped and Dan was forest ranger until his death in 1952.

John married Mary Thompson on December 24, 1925 and they settled in the Heart Valley district. They were blessed with six boys and six girls: David, Lloyd, Gordon deceased, John Jr., Harvey, Patrick, Mary, Peggy, Ella Mae, Jessie, Thelma and Shirley.

Elizabeth moved in with John and Mary after Dan died, where she lived for many years. She passed away at Grande Prairie hospital in 1969 at the age of 83 years. John passed away on July 31, 1970 and Mary Gulick has retired and lives in Rycroft.

JENSEN STORY — by Mary Jensen Duckett

My family left the "Dust Bowl" of Saskatchewan in the fall of 1937, looking for "greener pastures" as the saying goes.

Mack and May Jensen and their children, Mack Jr., Mary, Arthur, Albert, and Florence arrived at their "new home" situated on the edge of Kleskun Lake. It was quite a challenge to build up the place to make it livable. I remember Dad purchasing slabs and with brother Mack's help, building a barn and other buildings. We were told that the old house was very cold so an extra wall, approximately two to three feet, was built along the North side and filled with shavings from the mill. We spent a very comfortable winter in our house, burning mostly wood and a little coal when needed.

We attended Tranquility School. The community went through several bouts of sickness that winter which kept the children out of school quite a lot of the



Mack Jenson Sr. and Jr. seeding the crop at Kleskun Lake, 1938.

time. Our family went through the whooping cough, mumps, measles and tonsilitis. We were glad when spring arrived.

We worked up some land and seeded it but we didn't have a very good crop. The water supply wasn't too good either. We dug a well and pulled up water with a windlass, but that was only good for stock. So a well was dug on a neighbor's property on the sand ridge about a half mile away, where we got perfect drinking water. I remember an occasion when I went for water using a wheel barrow and a five gallon cream can. Everything went fine as I wheeled my can of water home. I got tired, so decided to have a rest, when lo and behold, what came out of the brush, but a bear! Well, I picked up the wheel barrow and the can of water and took off running hell-bent for home. Soon I just dropped everything and ran, not looking back to see if he was coming or not. I wouldn't go back again for ages. I haven't lived that one down to this day.

We left that place in the fall and moved a few miles further north onto the "Old Felton Place" as old-timers will remember it. An addition had been built onto the old log house during the summer so we could move in by fall. Again the slabs came in handy as we built a garage, big chicken house and several other buildings. Brother Mack worked in a sawmill part-time and helped with the land and the building. We had a four-wheel drive tractor, so we cleared land, ploughed it and raised several crops. We also rented other land nearby, with the family stooking and helping where they could.

Again, we had a water problem, hauling with a water wagon from the neighbor's for the house and stock. When the snow came we were able to melt it in a big steel trough over a fire for the stock.

Mom always seemed to grow ample garden vegetables, rhubarb and strawberries. With the good cream from our cows we enjoyed cream and strawberries quite often. Mom also made butter and sold it at Teepee Creek Store and received groceries in exchange. The store had the Post Office also, so we looked forward to mail day.

The schools were the meeting places for many functions. The "Whist Drives" were very popular at Tranquility. The young as well as the older people enjoyed these get-togethers. I guess the delicious lunches were contributors to that. At Christmas all of us students had parts to act in plays and sang songs in the concert. After putting in a very nervous hour or two, we were rewarded with lunch and then Santa Claus would arrive to hand out our gifts. Movie slides were often shown at school also. Spring brought out the old ball and bat. We played basketball and Anti-I-Over the barn. We spent a lot of time with broad jumps, high jumps, and races. Then the surrounding schools got together and competed. The winners got a trip to Grande Prairie to compete in the big Sports Day. I got to go a few times but was never lucky enough to bring home any trophies, but always came home happy after an enjoyable trip to the "bright lights". We took in an occasional picture show, a rare treat in those days.

Some of the times that weren't to my desire were when the doctor would come to our school and inoculate or vaccinate us all.

The teachers in those days taught from grade one to nine in one room and kept their pupils under control. One of my fondest memories of school was the last half hour or so set aside for story time. Our teachers read stories to us from several good books.

We farmed till the spring of 1942, then moved back to Saskatchewan to our farm where the better years had returned. Dad and Mom retired to Medicine Hat in about 1958, leaving Arthur and his wife on the farm. Dad passed away in 1959 after a lengthy illness. Brother Mack is married and has four children and lives at Valleyview. Archie and I live at Brooks and have two children. Arthur and his wife have four children. Florence is married to Pete Cooper of Edmonton and they have two children. Albert is at home with Mom.

We took a trip back last fall and looked the old places over. The first home place is now part of a community pasture, and the other place is still being farmed but only tumbled down buildings and old memories are left.

WILLIAM AND CARY KIRT

William and Cary Kirt were married in Calgary in 1905. They returned to the United States and in 1911 moved to New Norway. They subsequently arrived in



Juanita Winders, Chris Larsen and Louis Furham at the Kurt House.

the Peace River country in 1917, settling on the old Furnham homestead.

Mrs. Kirt was a very talented musician. Their home in the early days was the hub of much of the social activity carried on in the district. Her needle work was also a perfection.

Bill (Fondly called by his neighbors) took out a homestead in the Teepee Creek area and with their adopted daughter Juanita, they moved to their new log home in 1920.

Juanita, having met and married Lyman Winders, made the move back again around 1932, living only a mile away from her old home.

Mrs. Kirt passed away on March 12, 1934.

Lyman and Juanita had 3 sons, Raymond, David, Buddy, and two daughters, Betty and Marie. The four oldest children went to the Tranquility School. With Lyman's failing health, they moved to Surrey, B.C. where he later passed away, as did Buddy.

Juanita still lives there with her two granddaughters. Raymond and David live close by. Marie is married to Richard Mackey and lives at Ft. St. John. Betty and her husband have a medical business.

ANNA MACKEY — MEMORIES OF TRANQUILITY

Tranquility School was situated on a three acre plot of land bordering Kleskun Creek along the "Range Line". The name "Range Line" was unofficially given to the north-south road two miles west of the Teepee Creek Store. It was here that I taught between the years from 1942 to 1949.

During my stay, various students were paid token sums to haul drinking water from a well on Ed Grant's ranch each morning. During cold weather, Leon Martin would come and light the fire in the stove to warm up the school before any students arrived. He was never paid for such kind services. Other people often helped out in many ways also. One example of this was during cold weather, the children would take turns bringing ingredients for a hot soup at noon . . . one gallon of milk, one potato and one onion, all cooked on top of the big school stove. On other cold days, hot milk — cocoa was the noon treat. We won't mention the cod-liver oil pills each student was required to have daily.

During the time I taught at Tranquility School, we experienced periods of very cold weather. On a couple of those real cold days, where the temperature fell below the —60 degree Fahrenheit mark, it was so cold that we actually heard our breath freeze when we breathed out. The school never closed, but not all the students would show up.

Living four and a half miles from the school, I drove to and from the school. Most of the children walked, while a few rode horseback. Some of the walkers along my route to school were fortunate in cool weather, for they would hitch a ride with me. How dependent are we on school busses today? There were no school busses in those years, but our car was jam-packed with children on some of those cold, windy mornings. During seasons of good weather, I drove daily, but during periods of mud on ungravelled roads, or deep snow, daily travel by car was out of the question. Those were the days before snowplowing was the order of the day, so to solve the problem, Oscar skidded a small building to the schoolgrounds. It was our children's playhouse, about eight feet by ten feet in size.

Except for going home on the weekends, during these periods of impassable roads, this little building became home to my two children, Avis and Gordon, and to myself. Oscar stayed on the farm and kept things in order there, tending chores, cooking his own meals, etcetera.

Neighbors came to our assistance on occasions also. Mike Ciezki would hitch up his team to a sleigh and with us bundled up in heavy clothing and wrapped securely in blankets, drive us home. Adolph Sorken sometimes used his team and little heated caboose to give us the same service.

Oscar then constructed a v-shaped snowplow he could push with his McCormick-Deering tractor. This was used to plow out the road from Teepee Creek to Tranquility School a few times. He made the trip to Sexsmith with the same equipment a couple of times as well.

At other times, if we wanted the road snow-plowed to the school, we had to contact someone with a Cat. and dozer blade who was willing and able to come plow out the road. Maurice Pronovost was the one who came to our rescue. We were overjoyed to see Maurice slowly but surely plow the drifted snow into high banks taller than a car.

During spring breakup, with all other modes of transportation useless, the late Leo Nelson would come to our assistance with his Massey-Harris tractor. My two children and myself, clinging desperately to anything we could on his tractor, braved the flying mud from his tractor's wheels, but we would arrive safely at home for the weekend anyway.

School Inspectors, now called Superintendents, were Mr. Schrag, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Hambly. The one best known in the area was Mr. J. R. Stan Hambly.

Do you remember the first Seismograph shock you felt? Seismograph work was new to the pupils during 1942-49. One such outfit set up on the road-allowance, very near the school. All the children were allowed to eat their lunches out-doors to watch the seismograph crew at work, with their permission. While the children were sitting at the edge of the road's ditch, the blast went off. How surprised the children were to feel the earth jump beneath them!

The school was the meeting place for the community it served, and the people looked forward to meeting with each other at functions such as the annual Christmas Concert, our Literary Club's public-speaking displays, and the traditional box-social and card party. Even the little school parties for the students, such as on Valentine's Day, drew a small group of mothers to the school for the afternoon. Good neighbors made the hardships very bearable, even enjoyable.

REMI AND EVA MARTEL

Remi and Eva arrived in Clairmont on April 7, 1929, after travelling from Gogama, Ontario by train. They brought with them their family, Lester, Elie, Albert, Emma, Viola, Leo and Rose, who was a baby. Yvette and Jean were born later.

They first lived with the Ike Boyer family, Mrs. Boyer being Eva's sister. The remainder of that

summer they lived in grainaries on what was known as the Spring Quarter belonging to Bill Ford. They received $3.50 per acre for clearing and burning this land.

From Ford's place they moved to "Grandma Fitzpatrick's" land in East Kleskun and the children attended the East Kleskun School.

Remi worked the winter of 1929-30 for Buffalo Lakes Lumber Company at Braeburn near Woking. In the spring of 1931 they moved to their homestead at Tranquility, and the children transferred schools.

From 1931 to 1938, Remi worked for Stanley Pronovost in the saw mill. In the spring of 1937, the family moved to North Kleskun on the Joe Ruchon land. The children again transferred to the Webster Trail School. In 1938 they moved to Sexsmith.

They moved to a farm two miles west of Woking in 1939. Leo, Rose, Yvette and Jean attended school at Chinook Valley. For the rest of his years, Remi worked as a sawmill operator. First he operated a sawmill at Spring Creek on the north side of the Burnt Hills on the old highway. He also operated a sawmill for Frank Donald at Webster for about ten years.

In 1956 they sold their farm and moved into the Hamlet of Woking, where they resided until their passing: Eva in 1958 at 67 years and Remi in 1962 at 76 years. Their eldest son, Lester passed away Christmas Day, 1954 in Dawson Creek, B.C.

Over the years their family has moved to many parts of the country. Those living in Grande Prairie are Elie, his wife Mary and family, Albert, his wife Fern and family, Jean (Mrs. Ed Rutledge) and family. Emma (Mrs. Jim Linklater) and family live in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan. Those living in Prince George, B.C. are Viola (Mrs. Clarence Forsythe), now a widow and family and Leo, his wife Joyce and family. Rose (Mrs. Terry Donnelly) and family live in Teepee Creek, Alberta, Yvette (Mrs. Alf Robideau) and family live in Bezanson, Alberta.

Many of the grandchildren are now married and have children of their own. There are approximately 95 direct descendants from the union of Eva and Remi Martel.

LEON AND MARGARET MARTIN

The Martins moved to the Tranquility District in 1929, purchasing land from the Kleskun Lake Co. They brought with them three daughters, Leona, Agnes and Clara, and a grandson, Leo Nelson.

There were no buildings on the farm, so they skidded in a house which they bought in Clairmont when first immigrating to Canada from North Dakota in 1923. The house had been Clairmont's first hotel and was renovated into a suitable dwelling. The barns and outside buildings were built of slabs from the sawmills and served the purpose for years.

The land had to be cleared of willows which proved to be quite an ordeal as a fire had gone through the lake burning off the moss, as well as the topsoil, leaving a thick layer of ashes. The willows were not too hard to grub out as most of the roots were bare, but the nuisance of ashes getting into ones eyes and skin proved almost unbearable.

Everyone worked hard to get the land cleared for spring seeding, but were disappointed when the flood came. However, the flood subsided and the land was seeded to oats. It grew so rank and was hard to harvest, but the worst headache came when it was sold for 4 cents per bushel.



Mr. and Mrs. Leon Martin at their home on the Lake.

The girls were out of school as there wasn't a high school near enough to attend, so they settled down to work on the farm. Leo was only in grade 6, so he rode horseback to Kleskun Hill School to finish the term. The location of the new school was just across the road from Martin's house, so Leo was fortunate to finish grade 9 before settling down to farm work. He helped Clara with the janitor work at the school, carrying in cordwood and the drinking water from Ed Grant's well. In return, they received $3 per month which was a lot of money in the Hungry Thirties. It would buy a pair of shoes.



Leon Martin and grandson Johnny Spence hauling wood.

There were a lot of people in those days that would never think of taking relief and Martins were one of them, so the family had to all pitch in and help, regardless of age or sex. Agnes and Clara often worked for neighbors when they needed help, and Mr. Martin worked on the roads cutting brush, etc., to pay his taxes.

Food was always plentiful as most people grew their own. Margaret loved gardening, so always seeded more than the family could use. Her policy was to have plenty for the unfortunate one, which Leon carried through in his potato patch. Seemed like acres when it came to the digging. The seeding and cultivating wasn't such a chore, as he'd brought a potatoe planter and cultivator from the States. He did have a digger, but they still had to be picked up by hand.

Butchering was done on the farm and homemade sausages and wieners were always made. There were natives selling wild meat and fish, so meat was plentiful. Wheat was taken to the mill at Sexsmith and everyone had their own flour, bran and shorts. If a neighbor ran out, they borrowed. Very few groceries had to be purchased as even the laundry soap was made at home. Although Margaret never spun her own wool, she did do a lot of knitting. Even after she went blind she could carry on in her work. She knit bales of wool for the Red Cross during World War I for the boys overseas. She also was able to carry on sewing with her sewing machine. Leona was not so fortunate to be able to use her hands after her sight was gone, but did carry on with the housework in a fashion.

One of the most exciting times of the year was when all the neighbors went berry picking. Blueberries, saskatoons and cranberries were plentiful and were free for the picking. It was a treat to see a box of apples or an orange.

There was no electricity and deep freezes were nil, so there was a lot of canning done. It was also a big day when the washing machine was purchased with a gas motor and the scrub board and tub could be put away with the rest of the antiques. Also the gas lantern and lamps replaced the coal oil "smoking" lamps. The telephone came and replaced the "mocassin courier".

There were no entertainers from the outside world brought in, so one had to make his/her own entertainment which sometimes proved very hilarious, especially the ones put on in the Tranquility School. No matter what age, they all helped with the nonsense which was free of charge. The neighbors that were fortunate to have a large house, held parties and dances to which everyone was welcome and everyone brought lunch. Coffee was supplied by the hostess and made in large copper boilers. If it went to 60 below, you kept dancing until the sun came up and warmed up the country.

The schools were also used for entertainment. It was great fun when all the parents with their families, babies included, would gather in a big sleigh box with heated rocks to keep from freezing and travel miles to a concert. If it was too cold, you ran behind. Every child was taught to square dance along with learning the old time round dances. Although Margaret couldn't dance anymore, she could still teach the Minuet and a lot of steps from years back. She had always held dances in her home in North Dakota to raise funds for the unfortunate. In the winter, it was in her house once a month, and in the hayloft of the barn in the summer. She played in the orchestra all evening and they never charged. She couldn't carry on in this type of work in Canada, but she did knit and crochet for raffles to raise funds for needy projects. The evenings in the winter (when not at a concert or dance) would be spent popping corn, playing cards or just sitting around listening to the older folks tell stories of the past. Perhaps you couldn't get to sleep too soon after a thrilling ghost story, but you were always ready to listen to another one. The young people didn't have the opportunity to travel very far, so it was interesting to hear of far away countries.

One of the most thrilling stories to the Canadian children was of the cyclones in North Dakota, which wasn't too pleasant a memory for the Martin family as they had been through two large ones. The first was in 1917 when Leo Nelson was born during the middle of the storm. All telephone and communications were knocked out, so no professional help could be had. The baby lived, but Margaret (Martin) Nelson passed away a few days later. The large dairy barn was scattered all over the countryside and the walls were on top of the cattle and horses. The bawling of the cattle was never to be forgotten. Then Leon built a larger,



Leo Nelson on his way to East Kleskun School before Tranquility was built.

stronger barn of cement walls, that no wind could move but four years later, it went down in a cyclone, so it was not hard to persuade the Martins to move to Canada. Leo came along as his father never remarried.

Agnes was married to John Spence and they moved to a homestead at Tupper Creek. When their son, John Jr. was only two years old, Agnus passed away leaving the child with the Martins. "Jack" went back East and joined the Army, later remarried and lives in Timmons, Ontario. When John Jr. finished grade 9 in Tranquility, he left to join his father and stepmother, where he finished his schooling. He started out as a delivery boy for a large chain store while in high school and later became manager in one of its produce dept. After he married, he was sent to Port Arthur to manage one of the stores where he still resides with his family of six daughters. One son passed away in 1975.

After Margaret was blind, she accepted another orphan into her home. Dora Cordrey, 13 years old, attended Tranquility School and later became the bride of Leo. Dora was wonderful help to Margaret and Leona, since they were both blind. As Dora wasn't a ward of the government, Margaret supplied her needs and in return Dora helped Leona with the house. She was loved by the whole family as well as the neighbors.

Leona still baked bread and cakes after she became blind, but was limited to what she could do as far as house cleaning. Margaret could peel potatoes and wash dishes, so Dora supervised the work. Later, Leo built a house along side of Martins, where they lived until they moved to the Ed Martin farm.

Margaret passed away in 1942 in the Grande Prairie Hospital. Leona spent some time in the St. Joseph's Hospital in Edmonton, where she passed away. A few years later, Leon passed away at St. Joseph's Hospital in Whitelaw. There are only two survivors of the immediate Martin family of seven children. Nellie Schall lives in North Dakota and Clara Wageman lives in Kelowna, B.C.

EDWARD AND STELLA MARTIN — as told by Alice Cooley

Edward and Stella Martin came to the Peace River country from Lisbon, North Dakota in 1923. They moved to the Lee Alward farm in the Kleskun Hill district, where they were joined by Grandma and Grandpa Martin and the rest of the family. I also made my appearance.

They farmed the Alward place and did custom breaking for neighbors. Later in 1929, Dad and Grandpa bought land from the Kleskun Lake Cattle Company and so moved machinery and livestock down on the "lake".

After the school was built, the teachers needed a place to stay close to the school. Dad and Mom only lived half a mile away, so most of the time, the teachers stayed with them. In fact, for ten years they boarded teachers, which they enjoyed very much.

About 1939, Grandma Martin had a slight stroke and lost her eyesight. Later Leona also lost her eyesight, which was a very sad situation.



Ed Martin.

Dad and Mom had a growing family, Margaret and Rene, myself and later Eddie joined the family ranks. Drinking water had to be hauled by cream cans from Grant's for both families. Stock had to be watered from dams which froze to the bottom when it got down to 64 below zero. So more hard work setting up tanks and building fires underneath them to melt snow was a never ending job.

It was so nice to see spring come and gardening to be done which was a pleasure, as we had plenty of rain and rich soil so it grew wonderfully well. Then there were chicks, ducks, and turkeys raised for meat. Rabbits, prairie chickens, partridges, moose and deer were plentiful so we never went hungry.

The houses weren't always built too warmly. A years' supply of wood (which was a lot) was hauled out in the winter time and sawed.

In 1946 we moved to Summerland, B.C. Dad worked in the fruit industry, also road construction. He retired in 1969.

Grandma Martin had passed away in 1942. Grandpa came and lived with Mom and Dad for two years, then he decided to go back to the Peace, where both he and Leona passed away.

I live at Vernon, Margaret at Kamloops, Rene in Vancouver, and Eddy is still at Summerland. Mom lives in Kelowna, but does a lot of traveling since Dad passed away.

THE METZ STORY — by Leonard Metz

I was born in Kansas on the 25th of December, 1891. It was a great Christmas present for my mother. I never received one like it myself even though I've lived for 86 years. We left the U.S.A. and moved up to Hardisty and Monitor in 1912. My wife and I and brothers, Ruben, Bob, John and Timothy, sisters Mary and Anne, and Dad and Mother decided that Hardisty didn't have enough to offer so we loaded up the horses and ten cows and the machinery on the train and headed for the Peace River county in 1927 or so.

We unloaded at Grande Prairie all ready to go farming. Kleskun Lake looked good. Dad settled on land across from Boyers and my wife and I set up housekeeping on the south side of Kleskun Lake (where the headquarters of the Community Pasture now stands).

Running steam engines was our families profession, threshing, breaking land, moving buildings, anything calling for lots of power. We found out the hard way that bridges in this country were not made for such heavy equipment. One time out west of Sexsmith it took a crew of 14 two days plus horses and tractors to get us out of the bottom of a creek.

We threshed 11,550 bushels of hulless oats in one day at the McDonald farm at Clairmont. One time we threshed all day and all night to finish up before it rained. The old steamer never ran better.

Kleskun Lake gave us a bad time between fire and flood. Talk about Hell and High Water, that was it. One time when the water came up, Harry Beamer and his wife woke up and the floor was covered with water. Harry waded out to milk his cow. The barn was so flooded he chased the cow upon a narrow manure pile

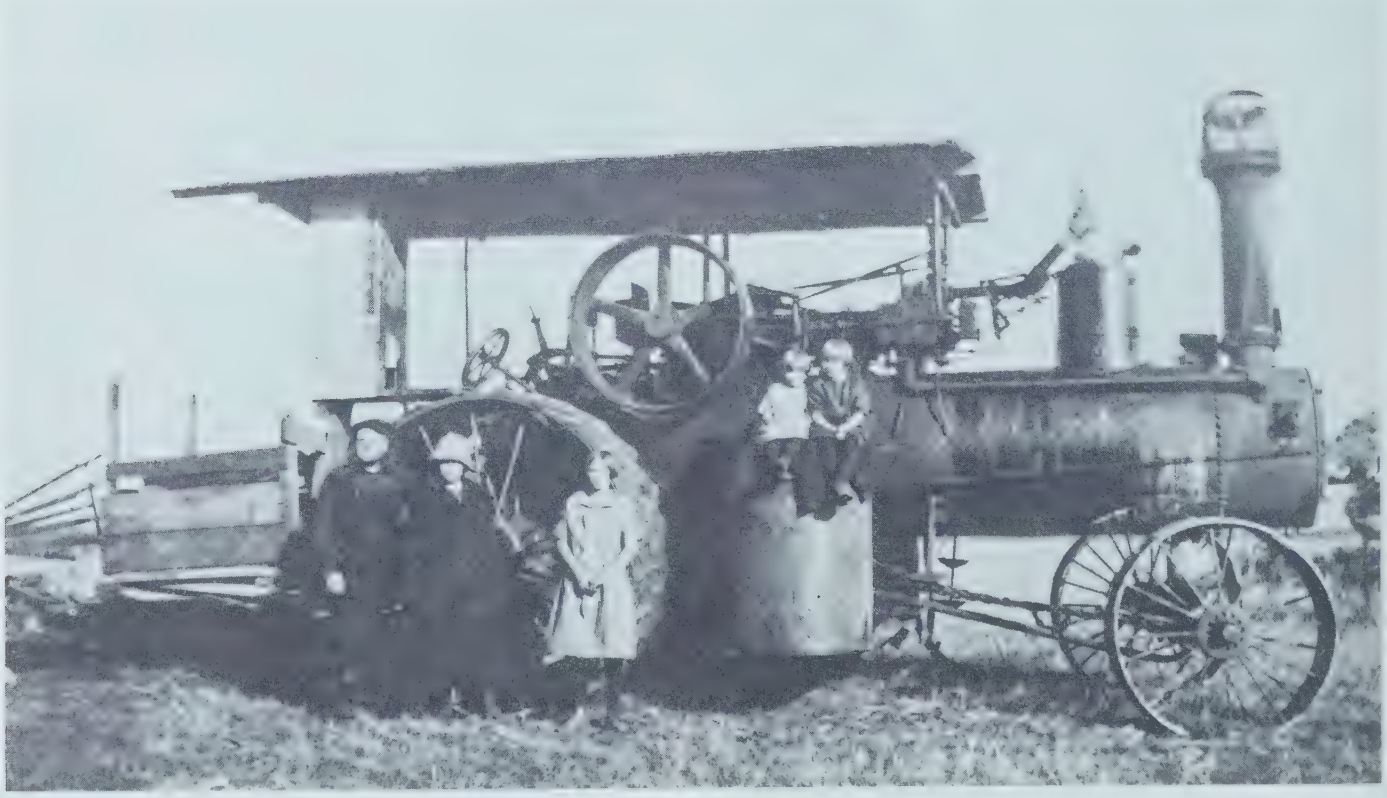


Tim, John, Dellia, Leonard, Ruben and Mary Metz leaving Monitor.

which wasn't wide enough for him to milk her from the side, so he milked her from behind. His pail was just about full when she let drive. Harry got covered with warm milk and then rinsed in cold water.

There was a ditch by our place. A fellow came along with a big load of grain. He rested his team, then took the line to them. He was going to hit it hard so he wouldn't get stuck. Well, when he hit the ditch his double trees broke, out he flew, and away went his team. That load sat there all day and night before he caught his team and came back.

Then a dry year came and the lake caught on fire. It was in the fall. We just got word that Mr. Fields, a



Leonard and wife, Jean Nutt, Harley Nutt and Milton Metz.



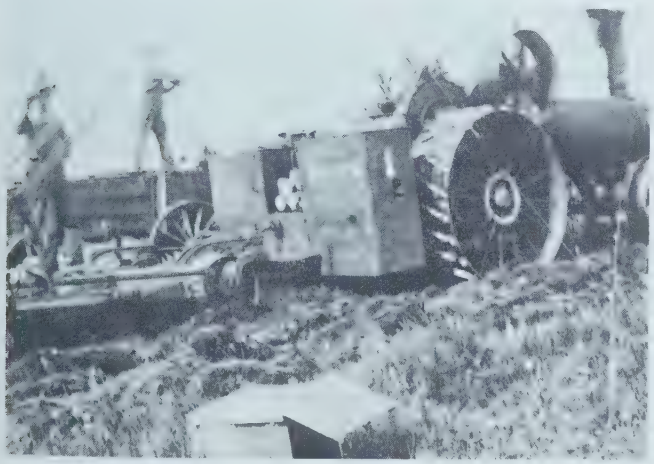
Steamer threshing about 1929.

photographer, had just died. Night came on and the smoke rolled in. There was a funny noise at the window. We saw a horses' muzzle rubbing the pane, then someone hollered, "We're lost." I went out and told the riders they were just a little ways from the road. The wife put the lantern on the step and I walked out to show them the way. I turned to come back and couldn't see the light. It sure was spooky. I was sure I was going in the right direction and was just beginning to get pretty scared when I crashed into something. It was the back of the house. I couldn't see the lantern until I was only a few feet from it. A lot of people got lost that fall.

The boys around the district used to make a bit of moonshine. One night there was a dance and one of the boys wanted an empty five gallon can to take a little moonshine along to sell. Mother told him there was a clean can out by the steamer, so away he went. He grabbed the can and went back to the still in the bush and filled it up. Quite a few of the boys came home early from the dance that night. They picked up the wrong can. The one they filled had a couple of quarts of cylinder oil in the bottom. No one died, but some wish they could have.

We had a few chickens so we built a little chicken house of poles and straw. One old hen hatched out 15 chicks which we were very proud of. Mother was washing clothes outside and she heard a commotion at the chicken house. An old razor back sow was after the chicks. I couldn't drive her out of the chicken house, so I ran and grabbed a pot of boiling water and threw it on her. She let out a piercing squeal and went right through the back wall of the chicken house. We never saw her again.

Johnny Demara went by one day leading a pig on a lariat rope behind a saddle horse. Pigs had a habit of roaming the country in those days, so did cows. My son Milton was staying at his grandmother's one day. She



Watering the Iron Horse?



Milton Metz, 1929.



Snowed in, bringing home the separator on horse drawn sleighs.

had washed his one good shirt and hung it on the line. She went out to get it and saw the last of it going into an old cow's mouth. She grabbed the broom, but, too late. The shirt was gone.

We were in Sexsmith one day. A couple of fellows were coming down the street. They had a beer bottle of formaldehyde to pickle grain with. They met another fellow that had been put on the Indian list and just for fun, they asked him if he'd like a drink. He grabbed the beer bottle and before they could stop him, he drank it and down he went. Dr. Gamey saw the whole thing. He ran down to the man and pumped his stomach, then sent him to the hospital. The man survived, but it sure frightened the other two fellows that gave him the bottle.

In 1934, we decided to leave Kleskun Lake. We could only farm 25 acres. The rest was under water, so we steamed up and moved to the Wanham area. You know, I think I'd like to live my life over again. That is if someone would just pay me enough, by gad.

LEO AND DORA NELSON

Leo Nelson was born in Lisbon, North Dakota to Margaret and Edwin Nelson on July 30, 1917. His mother passed away when Leo was an infant, so his grandparents became his guardians. He moved to Canada with them in 1923.

Leo attended the Kleskun Hill School until moving to Tranquility. After his school days were over, he stayed on the farm.

Dora Cordrey came to live with the Martins (Leo's grandparents) at the age of 13 and also attended Tranquility School. Dora had been left an orphan, so Leo and her had something in common.

In 1942, Leo and Dora were married and stayed on to farm the land of Leon and Ed Martin. They had three girls and 2 boys, born in the Maternity Home in Sexsmith. The Tranquility School was by this time, just a happy memory, so their children were bussed to the Consolidated School at Teepee Creek.

Leo's father was unable to carry on his farming, so asked Leo to consider moving to Lisbon to take over his farm.

Leo sold his farm to Willard Simpkins, and moved his family to North Dakota, where he purchased his father's farm. The Nelson's hearts were still in Canada and were preparing to move back, when they met their tragic death in a car accident.

Their son Larry resides in Lisbon. Their daughter Faye married Duane Smith and they have a son, and also reside in Lisbon. Joyce married Chuck Even and they have a daughter and reside in California. Joan married Dale Harris of Iowa, and they have a daughter. Their youngest son Kenneth has enlisted in the U.S. Army for a three year term.

Dora and Leo left many friends and relatives to mourn their loss.

JACK PEPPIN

Jack came over from England about 1930 and settled on the east shore of Kleskun Lake. As the road was along the sand ridge, he always referred to himself as the "Sand Ridge Bum" because he couldn't stand his own cooking. As he really enjoyed a home cooked meal, he would "try", as he put it, to arrive at meal time.

At the time Callious house burnt down, he invited Henry and Mrs. Calliou to stay at his place, which they did for two weeks. Mrs. Calliou was a good cook.

The mosquitoes led him a life of misery. They'd leave everyone else just to get a nip of his English blood, and when the rabbits made such a mushroom of his green feed stack that it toppled over, it was just too much. So he bade his friends goodbye and went back to England, always going to return some day.

Jack settled in Harrogate, North Yorkshire. At the end of August, 1976, he passed away after a heart attack. He was predeceased by his wife, Winifred, in March, 1975.

WILLIAM PINSCH — as told by Mary Sorken

Bill, as he is known to all his friends and neighbours, was born in Poland on May 28, 1904. He immigrated to Canada in 1928 and worked on farms near Legal, Alberta.

About 1930 he came to the Peace River Country and filed on a homestead near Pouce Coupe, which he later abandoned. Bill lived with his brother, John, in the Teepee Creek area and worked for farmers and at saw mills, before buying the N.W. 30-73-3-6 from Vivian Leland about 1935. Here he farmed alone for the next 40 years having acquired three more quarters. After selling some land and renting out his home quarter, he continued to live in his small log shack till sickness forced him to hospital in Decmeber, 1976. He is missed by his neighbours who have watched for the smoke from his chimney over the years, as this was a sign in the homestead days, when so many men lived alone, with no communication, that all was well.

GEORGE ROBINSON STORY

My first sight of the Peace River Country proper was from the siding at Culp, named after Joe Culp a very well known conductor on the E.D. & B.C. Rly. where we stopped to unload as the train could take us no further, their excuse was quite valid too, no grade beyond.

We had come from Twining, near Three Hills, south of Edmonton where we had wintered the railroad construction outfit consisting of horses and machinery and a few men, and opened up a small coal mine to

keep busy in the winter time, come spring, we, that is the Wilson Construction Co. had a contract to build a few miles of grade on the west side of the Smoky River and so we were dumped at the siding of Culp. There was nothing at all at Culp but siding in the latter part of April or the beginning of May in 1915.

The Wilson Construction Co. was not a large outfit but was fairly close to the average crew employed in that country at that time. We had plenty of horses and dumpwagons though a dumpwagon is not the handiest of vehicles for freighting anything but loose dirt or rock, in those days we used what we had. There was no trail cut through the bush down the hill to the Smoky River which would be a drop of about 500 ft. and perhaps a mile long and covered with poplars large and small and willow and we cut a trail as we went, some of the ditches were steep but all were short and on the steepest of these we had men stationed whose job was to roughlock the wagons as they came to these sharp ditches by the simple method of poking a poplar pole through the spokes of the hind wheels, this method of roughlocking kept the wagon and driver from falling on top of the horses alright but was rather hard on spokes, most wagons lost spokes, I think there were five busted out of mine. I was the timekeeper not a muleskinner, but we had to get our outfit off the Smoky Hills and into camp and some shelter erected and we only had a skeleton crew so that I was a muleskinner that day, and so was the boss and so was the cook. No union interference in those days and if a job needed doing and a man was around capable of doing it, it was done, cheerfully. We all got down to the river flat without much damage other than broken spokes. We were lucky for a man bringing down a grader for another contractor was thrown off and killed a few days later, I think the contractors name was Grant. We then had to go up the Smoky River about a mile to where a ferry, powered by the current had been put in, this took us across the river which is about 400 yards wide at Prudens Crossing where we were then. From there we had a trail to our campsite which was by a spring of good water partly up the hill and close to our contract. The timber and brush had already been cleared off the right of way so our first job was blowing and removing the stumps. A short description of our camp and its site may fit in here, there was an old log building there which I took over for an office, it was about 12' x 12' built of small poplar logs with a sod roof, poorly made, as I discovered when we had our first rain. There was no hay under the sod. Now a good roof can be made with tough sod if a foot of good slough hay is put on the roofing poles first, neglect the hay and two feet is better than one, and you have a leaky roof and it will keep leaking for two or three days after the rain has stopped and it leaks mud not water. The shack was probably built by a trapper for winter use only and I had just come from the bald prairie and was entirely ignorant, and legitimately so, of log cabins and how they should be constructed, a defect in my education which I remedied the next year, the rest of the camp was canvas. Except for the cookshack which was also where the cook and his helper, the cookie, slept and this had walls of wood, this was necessary as shelves had to be nailed to it. The rest of the camp was canvas including a big marquee for the horses, and there were over sixty head of them. It took 20 horses to pull the grader, 6 and 6 these were hitched directly to the machine, one teamster on a high seat on the grader drove these twelve, then there was a pull-cart with four horses, these were light horses as they had to be active, the job of the pullcart was to help pull the grader on the strait-a-way, it was simply constructed just two wheels on an axle and a tongue in the middle, there was a hook about twelve inches long on a foot of chain attached to the middle of the axle under the drivers seat and when he came to the end of the cut the pullcart driver had to unhook from the end of the grader tongue, dash around to the other side of the cut and stop in position to hook onto the grader again and get going without stopping the grader, active horses were needed, then there was the pushcart with the other four horses and these pushed on the centre of the machine. The cart itself was an axle with a wheel on each end, these wheels steered like the front wheels of a car, there was a seat for the driver and a flat steering wheel in front of him, his job was to push the grader on the straight-away, but his main job was to help turn the machine at the end of the cut when the twelve horses hitched to the front of the grader came to the end of the furrow and the plow or disc, which ever was being used, was raised and the machine began to turn, the pushcart then had to assist by pushing the rear end around, that is where the steering wheel came into use. It was quite a tricky job till one got used to it. That makes three teamsters, then there were two men operating the grader who was the boss, handled the plow raising it up or down as conditions required, the other handled the elevator, this was a heavy rubber belt which carried the dirt from the plow to the dumpwagon which was travelling alongside. When a man was sick or off for some other reason the timekeeper used to fill in. There would be twelve or more dump wagons depending on the distance from the cut to the fill being built on that job, the wagons were all adjusted to use three horses by offsetting the tongues.

Charley Wilson who owned the Wilson Construction Co. was sometimes in camp with his wife and two of his three daughters but not often and Jimmy Pease was his foreman and he ran the operation, the contract was finished in the fall and by that time a temporary bridge was completed across the Smoky River at Watino for the railroad and the contractors equipment could now be loaded for their next job, the steel was laid as far as the next contractor up the grade from us and Jim had just got the grader off the grade and back in camp, it was too wide and so Jimmy's crew had pried the track over the the edge of the grade so that the ties hung half there length in space on a 20 ft. fill, this was okay because the steel only went another mile or so thought Jim, but as Jim and I were smoking and chatting outside the shack that evening we both heard a locomotive puffing very slowly up the grade and as I suspected, was taking some empties to the end of the steel for the contractor there to load, they only had two cars and they were going so cautiously that they saw the first one tip over and were able to stop before the second one followed it, trouble was there was a

man in that first boxcar and though he suffered no serious injury he was a bruised and very mad man after his roll in an empty boxcar. The railroad people never knew how it happened and we heard nothing of it. Jimmy was a worried man for awhile, anyway we could not warn them it was too far up the trail which was very rough and very dark, but as long as I live I will not forget the look on Jimmy's face as we listened to that engine as it puff-puff-puffed up the grade that dark night.

By this time it was October and I had written to an old friend at Duhamel south of Caorose and I told him that I was in good hunting country and that he had better join me and we would put in the winter trapping, Gus thought this a good idea and he came to Prudens Crossing about two miles from the camp. Gus Dittberner was well known to Charley Wilson as he worked for him on the last contract at the Grande Trunk Rly. in Calgary where I was timekeeper and Gus was the blacksmith and a good one too, he was a big man also 20 yrs. older than I but we always hit it off well together. Prudens Crossing where the ferry crossed and where, on the west side was cache No. 19 operated by J. D. McArthur who had the contract to build the whole railroad and where the smaller contractors got the bulk of their supplies, to the financial advantage of J. D. McArthur. The town of Prudens Crossing was on the east side of the Smoky River and it was quite a town. It was nearly half a mile long up the river from the ferry, towards where the bridge was being built that summer, as soon as the steel got down to the river, the grade on the east side of the river was already built. I think the buildings were all of logs for I cannot remember one of frame though there were several of half canvas and half logs, there were a few stores, Crummy Bros. had a general store, there was a hardware but I forget the name, also a restaurant, and a livery barn, and believe it or not, a jewelry store. There were many more buildings scattered along that trail, probably thirty occupied by bootleggers and "The Ladies of Easy Virtue." And how many of these ladies there were would be anybody's guess but every two weeks or so the R.N.W.M.P. who had a post in Watino just west of the bridge, would raid them and pick up 30 or so, fine them $100.00 and turn them loose to make some more money for the next raid, good business, but they did not get all the girls. They had a hide-away up the river a few miles, where the Little Smoky empties into the Smoky and they had two or three cabins built there, some of them had ways of forecasting a raid, and then would leave town and hit up the trail for the cabins, often in the dark, I have been told that the trail was well marked as the willows and cranberries along the trail were well hung with silk torn from the silk dresses as the girls ran up the path in the dark. Railroad building sixty years ago involved a lot of very hard work and the relaxation provided by these people was necessary, and they were all professionals from the cities.

I had taken a few red fox around the camp mostly around the garbage pit and one very large skunk which I got several miles up the Smoky in a bear set which I had gone to a lot of trouble to make. I got hold of a ham that was spoiled, it weighed about 10 lbs. and I had a bear trap, it weighed 40 lbs. and one Sunday I packed this load up the river with an axe and a lunch and spent the day building a log pen with a narrow entrance in one corner and a roof of logs, heavy ones. I had never tried to trap a bear before but I was sure going to get this one. Next Sunday I went up the river again to get the bear, no bear, and no tracks, so I left it another week and up the river again.

I got within half a mile and I began to suspect that something was different, I had never had anything to do with a wild bear but I had seen many at close quarters in zoos and none of them smelled like that seemed to be getting stronger the closer I got to my bear set. Well, there it was, the first skunk I ever saw and the biggest I was ever to see in many years of trapping, it had climbed over the bear trap and was heavy enough to spring that big trap and was caught lengthwise killed instantly of course, but not before he emptied his scent glands. Many people have the idea that skunk scent is a rotten smell, this is not so, it is not foul smelling as is a cat's excrement or human for that matter but is a chemical smell and tremendously strong.

Nobody, of course likes it but many chemical smells would be as offensive if as strong, and to an onion hater like me I would far rather be exposed to skunk smell than green onion smell if both are in the same volume. I skinned that skunk (got a buck and a half for it too) but I was not too popular around camp for awhile till the scent wore off, both bears and skunks unknown to me before that as there were not any on the prairie where I came from, however I learned and fast. So I had a few pelts before Gus Dittberner arrived from Duhamel and a few days after his arrival we moved into a log cabin close to the track which had been abandoned by a small party of stationmen who had finished their contract and moved on. This cabin had been built of poplar logs and roughly put together in the spring for a crew of four or five men to live in during the summer months only and was hardly fit for occupancy in a Peace River winter and that winter of 1915-16 was a cold one down to minus 70 degrees F. on several nights in January. It was a wonder Gus and I didn't freeze as neither of us had experienced such temperature before, minus 50 F. yes, I saw that in Calgary in the winter of 1911-12 but there is a lot of difference in —50 and —70, —50 is mighty uncomfortable but —70 is dangerous. I was told that the government thermometer at Peace River registered minus 72 in January of 1916, I have spent over sixty winters in the north and that is the toughest winter I've seen, but Gus and I had good blankets also a big yellow dog that was dropped off by a fellow walking the track and going outside and so left us his dog and on those coldest nights he slept between us.

Well we toughed it out, Gus till March and I till the break up and we got a nice bunch of fur, including a silver fox which we sold to Fred Aslin, a fur buyer who was stationed in Watino that winter, for $175.00, several fishers, a few mink, a few skunks and many muskrats and weasels. At that time there was no chance of obtaining a winter job and work in the summer did not bring the wages paid today, here are a few that I recollect for comparison, and todays youths



First homestead shack, 1916. N.E. 6-73-3-6.

who can ask $10 to $15 a day with little or no experience, and less desire to work, will probably laugh at these figures; teamsters on the grade got $26.00 a month and board, I, as timekeeper got $30.00, Big Bill the cook got $50.00. Stationmen who took small contracts on stretches of the grade which could not, for some reason be handled by machinery got 15 cents a cu. yd. they used wheelbarrows or small cars on narrow tracks, there was a lot of this type of work between the Smoky and the Burnt River due to swampy ground, but I did not hear of any of the stationmen getting rich moving dirt at 15 cents a cu. yd. These fellows also provided their own tools, food and accommodation.

The steel had been laid, in some places hung would be a better word, to Grande Prairie. As I have already mentioned our cabin was alongside the grade and there was a cut close by, not a deep one perhaps ten ft. and there was a small spring in it which did not freeze until it had built up about a foot of ice in this cut. The crew laying the steel came along and laid the steel right on top of the ice. Imagine the mess when the ice melted in the spring. I also saw in the spring, where for the want of a culvert the grade had washed out for a distance of about 150 yds. and about 1½ ft. deep and the steel hung in the air for that distance, I was able to report this before a train was scheduled.

It had always been my intention to locate a homestead and try my hand at farming, I had been raised on a large market garden so naturally my thoughts turned to the land and growing things, and so I took one of the first trains to Grande Prairie and a description of that trip might be interesting. I carried a pack, a large one but not too heavy, but it contained everything necessary for living and as it was bulky I left it in the vestibule. We made it without any trouble to Spirit River but from there on things started to get interesting. We were supposed to get to Grande Prairie before dark and it was about noon when we got to Spirit River and we were doing fine till we got some distance south of Rycroft where we derailed, the locomotive and one car were off the track and in the mud. Much of the track here was laid on brush which had been shoved under the ties as these had gone down into the mud, this is what had made our car rock so badly when we got into the green poplar bush country, we only travelled at about four or five miles an hour or I'm sure she would have toppled over on her side, even as it was the passengers were a pretty worried bunch and they were about half the few passengers were women and kids. Well we got out of that mess and had gone some five more miles and we were off the track again and worse that the last time and it was nearly dark. It would be a hopeless job to try and put that train back on the steel in the dark, the crew was tired out from the last derailment, the male passengers too as we all helped wherever we could so the conductor said we would stay where we were till morning which was alright for those who had grub and anyone had travelled on the E.D.B.C.R. before always carried, at

least, a lunch, but there were some on board who had had nothing to eat since morning, they had walked the length of the train, two cars and a caboose, and found no dining car. Well the conductor had seen my big packsack and he seemed to know who it belonged to and he came to me and asked if I had any grub in it, and when I told him yes I had grub and dishes both he told me there were women and kids who had not eaten since morning and could I fix them up with a meal on the caboose stove. I agreed of course, he said there was water in the caboose and so I got busy and gave them moose and beans and bannock which I made in the frypan and coffee so the women and kids did not have to go to bed hungry and I had some porridge for them in the morning too and coffee. We were off the track once more before we got into Grande Prairie that night and that made it from the siding where I boarded to Grande Prairie, about 70 miles, from 9 A.M. to around 5 P.M. the next day.

I knew nothing of the Grande Prairie district but had met a Mr. Whalen who had stopped at the coal mine at Twining on his way North to look for homesteads for himself and two boys, and again I met him when the train stopped at the siding near our cabin on the first train in a month or so before and we chatted for an hour that time and he told me of the country east of Grande Prairie where he and the boys had filed on land, and so on getting to Grande Prairie I thought I had better have a look at the part of the district I knew anything about, and so I went to the Government Land Office and saw Jack Redmond the agent and I got plots of a few townships in that direction and next morning took a small pack containing a little grub and a blanket.

Well I finished up in the Kleskun district on the south east corner of the Kleskun Lake. This would be in late April of 1916, if memory serves me right, but that would be almost 61 years ago and I have no note: I wish that I had made notes of the happenings in those early years in the district, but I was in my early 20's and who cares? In those days the Kleskun Lake was not a swamp. As soon as I saw it I was smitten. I had found what I was looking for and I started looking over the plots that Jack Redmond had provided me with. The lake itself was in township 73 range 4 and I could see it took up the most of it and I didn't have a plot of 73-5-W6 anyway but I did have one of the adjoining township 73-3-W6. So I started looking over 73-3. I found one settler on the S.W. of 6 Sandy Morong who had filed on his land the summer before and he had a rough barn built as he had four horses, Sandy lived in one stall and the four horses in the other two. I could find no other settler on section 6 and my plot showed the other three quarters open for filing, I liked the north east quarter the best of the three; even though it had some sloughs and patches of willow brush on it there was at least 100 acres of high land on it and the soil was very good.

I stayed with Sandy that night and next day walked back to Grande Prairie and filed on the N.E. 6-73-W6th. I lived in the spare stall with Sandy and helped him for about two weeks and then he helped me get out a set of poplar logs and put up a shack on the north side of the quarter, where the larger poplars were. We were working on this when I received a letter from my home in England saying that my brother, younger than me by a year or so, had been killed in action in France.

Of course that was before the day of the private radio, in fact the moving pictures were pretty crude, and in the places that I had been living in since coming into the north we never saw a uniform or heard the war mentioned and if we saw a newspaper, which was very seldom, it was likely two weeks old. I had received word from my brother a year ago that he had enlisted and was a signaller but that was all that I knew so his sudden death was a great shock to me.

I knew what had to be done, that had already been done when I heard of his enlistment and I would enlist right away but I decided to finish the shack I was building so as to have a place to live in if I should survive the war, and some place to store the few possessions I had gathered up and wanted to hang on to, for I had definitely decided that if there was enough of me left to ship home, this was to be my home beside the Kleskun Lake. The folks who live close to what is left of that lovely lake today, if they could ever read this, would probably snort "Is he referring to that bog north-east of Clairmont?" And they would be right for that is what the greed of man has done to one of the finest migratory bird resting and breeding grounds in the west and probably in Canada. Many a time in France my thoughts went back to the beautiful spot I had in Alberta to return to, and, in my longing I could almost hear the geese and the swans calling and beating their wings on the water as they fought to get airborne. And eventually, after many delays caused by spells in hospitals, a slight wound, two spells of the Spanish 'flu in France and an operation in Basingstoke, I was sent to Rhyll in Wales, a dispersal camp close to Liverpool where drafts of men were picked and sent to the ship in Liverpool. I wasn't there long before my name was called on a list for a draft to sail for Halifax next day, the call I had been waiting for since November 11th, and this was April of the next year. But would you believe it I had to report sick off that parade, and was hospitalized with the third dose of the Spanish 'flu. So I was in hospital again and for another month this time and then back to the camp and my name on the bottom of the list. But eventually I got on a ship and landed back in Halifax, the ship did not sink, my luck had definitely changed. At last I got back to Edmonton to Grande Prairie where I stopped overnight and in the morning I struck out with some groceries in my pack for the homestead that I had been dreaming of for the past three years.

There was a bit of graded road out of Grande Prairie in May of 1919 but not very much, but Miss Rita Carveth caught up to me and gave me a lift as far as their place and then very kindly invited me in to dinner.

So when I left the Carveth place I was in pretty fair shape for the rest of the trip and hit over the top of the Kleskun Kill on a bee line for the homestead the N.E. 6-73-3-W6. When I got over to the north side of the hill where I could look down on the lake things did not look just right and when I was closer to the shoreline I could see a large machine working some three miles or so north. I had no idea what they could be doing out

there in the lake and went on another three miles to the homestead filed on three years before. Everything looked as it did when I left and I doubt that the door had been opened once in my absence, I had hung a rifle, a Standard automatic, under the ridge log, and when examined, the only damage was a slight bit of rust on the muzzle and that same rifle killed many a moose and bear before I replaced it with something more modern and more effective at long range.

The bedding which had hung from the roof by a wire was, when aired out, in good shape and I was able to use it that night, and after a good night's rest I set out to see what was happening to the lake. It was being drained, the machine that I had seen yesterday from the hill was a floating dredge which floated in the ditch it was digging, it was piling the dirt on both sides and was making a ditch with about a ten foot bed-width. This was in the spring of 1919 and they had obviously worked the year before and perhaps started the year before that. Their object, was to drain Kleskun Lake dry regardless of the ducks and the geese and the swans who should have had some prior right for they had been using the lake for centuries and never doing it a bit of harm.

Kleskun Lake is filled from the north, the West and the South by at least ten creeks, most of them being dry after May and they are fair sized creeks and they put a lot of water into the lake in the two months April and May that they normally run. The ditch that the company were making, with a 10' bed-width might, if kept perfectly clean, no grass allowed to grow in it, might carry as much out as two, of the inlet creeks put in, and at this rate it would take five months to drain the lake of the spring runoff, or till August. We will allow some for evaporation say what the main ditch handles in a month, that would drain it in July an optimist's estimate, now I would like to ask the Kleskun Lake Co. what crops they propose to sow in this climate in July.

No they are not draining the lake to farm it to raise food for the war effort as they would have us believe, but they are willing to destroy a beautiful lake and innumerable birds on the chance of financial gain in real estate.

So we will take a look at it from the speculators point view, this makes more sense. Ed Thompson, of Kingman, Alberta was the instigator of the scheme, I knew him well, a nice enough old guy if you were wise enough not to trust him, Mike Sheedy was another who put in a lot of time at the ranch and, to their sorrow, the Bank of Montreal became mixed up in it and there were several others whose names I knew at the time but have now forgotten. But Ed Thompson was the prime mover in forming the Kleskun Ranching Co. which acquired the right, under the Reclamation Act, to drain the lake and grow food for the war effort. I think this was done in 1917 but the application may have been made in 1916 and the Conservative of the day in Ottawa, I think it was Mr. Bowden's who granted the application without proper investigation, I have never trusted a Tory politician since and never will.

When I first saw the lake it was in the spring and the water was high and came over the range three, it does yet if there is a strong west wind blowing two or three days, and the lake was the summer home of hundreds of thousands of migratory birds and many thousands of muskrats and these rats were of an exceptional strain being somewhat larger than the usual rat and heavily furred and John McCauley, the best and most honest fur buyer I have ever dealt with, told me himself that the Kleskun muskrats were the best he had ever handled, and these rats provided many of the early homesteaders with the money they needed to stay on their land and develop it, where otherwise they had to go out and find a job as they had to have money and the homestead was in the development stage and not producing. But the Company destroyed, not the rats, but the environment which produced them.

It was a delightful experience to sit outside in the evening and just listen to the birds, not song birds, we have few of them, but the wild fowl in the breeding season, for the water fowl do a lot of talking in that season and their voices carry a long way on a quiet evening and over the water, and, if you knew the sound, you would hear the swans beating the water with their wings trying to become airborne.

The Kleskun Lake was a great resting place both in the fall and the spring for all kinds of ducks, the two kinds of Canada geese and both Trumpeter and the Whistler swans but it was the spring that I liked the best when the lake was full and the birds closer to the shore. In the fall they had heard a few shotguns popping and they stayed more towards the middle of the lake, and the mating talk would be missing too and what few calls one heard would be family calls when they became separated and the young were trying to find their parents or the old birds their young. Though most of the birds were migrants and were heading for homes in the Northwest Territory some went no farther and nested in the lake some of the geese also some of the swans and thousands of ducks and many of these provided tasty duck dinners when big enough. The south side of the lake was the summer home of a fairly large flock of Sand Hill cranes and I have seen a flock of at least 200 together and I know that some of them nested there.

Before the ditches were dug the natural evaporation would shrink the lake and hay could be cut on the east side for nearly two miles and for a good way on the north side but I have never cut hay except on the east side so cannot say how far out the farmers cut on the other three sides. On our side the haying was wonderful some years, I remember Bert Mackey and I cut together about a mile west from the range line and the hay was so high that we had to have a man on horseback go ahead of the mower on the first round so he could guide the mower driver and so make a reasonable shaped strikeout, I hesitated to put this in as a stranger reading it might think it so farfetched that he could not believe it, and think the whole story was a bunch of lies but it is the truth, Bert was a fairly big man, I would say just under six ft. maybe 5 ft. 10 and if he walked into that hay for 10 ft. you could not see the top of his head, man mowing with a tractor would not have needed a guide but we were using horses and the driver on a horsemower is pretty low. We put up a lot of hay in a shortwhile and stacked it by rolling it up with a long rope and a team of horses

which is a good way of stacking and quite fast too. We neither of us knew what kind of grass we had put up but it was over 6 ft. long and mature as the seed just rolled out of when handled with a fork, I made it my business to find out the name of that grass it was Reed Canary Grass and the seed at that time was quoted in the seed catalogue at $1.00 per pound. There has never been hay like that there since it was there 20 years ago and is probably there yet but not as long as I was in the district did it grow to a height like that or make seed. It was a wild grass, it is quite impossible that it was ever seeded there. It also proved to be excellent feed for horses, I had no cattle at that time.

The Kleskun Ranch Co. finished digging their ditches in 1920 or 1921, I forget which, the bigger were dug with the dredger which I mentioned earlier when it was no longer needed it was taken out and lay for years in a yard in Sexsmith, I have no idea what became of it. Another piece of ditching equipment I saw being used when I returned in 1919 was an affair like a huge potato hiller and worked the same way it made a ditch about 4 ft. wide on top and 2 ft. deep and was pulled by a team of three or four horses turning a big windlass and winding a cable on a drum with the other and attached to the ditcher, I was sorry not to see it working but it had been working the day before and appeared to be doing an excellent job, I imagine the windlass had to be moved every hundred yards or so. That gives you some idea of what the Kleskun Lake looked like when the Lord made it and I think he knew what he was doing and made a pretty good job, and to see what it looked like and what it produced after the ranching company had their way with it, they did not last very long anyway and all the damage that could be done to a beautiful and productive natural feature of our country they managed to do in 9 years. They had purchased two already developed farms which straddled the Kleskun Creek which was the natural outlet which took care of the overflow if the lake should get too high, a cloudburst or exceptional snow conditions at break-up, one of these was the farm of Dan Gulick. I think he had three quarters, also the land farmed by Bill Kirt and Louis Furhman all on the south side of the creek. This became known as the "Home Farm" and the company added a few inexpensive buildings and corrals.

It was in the fall of 1919 that they began to accumulate a herd of cattle and they were not fussy, could not be, the war was over a year ago and now was the time to make a killing while the price was high and they had men in the Kingman district and the Camrose area and, as I said they were not fussy and I was told at the time that they were paying $100.00 a head for any old kind of a cow that would breed, and if my memory is still reliable it was 900 head they shipped in. Of course there were some good stock in the bunch and they got some fairly good bulls but by and large the herd was not much to look at but that's what they started the Kleskun Ranch with. Perhaps they were just unlucky and perhaps Mother Nature was rewarding them for what they had done to our Kleskun Lake but the winter of 1919-20 was the hardest winter on livestock and game that I have ever seen in sixty winters in the Peace. The snow covered the blazes put on the trees to mark a trail and these are about shoulder high, no colder than a normal winter but little thawing till the spring thaw and that was very late that year, so late in fact that the few farmers were established enough to have a crop to put in, feared that spring in 1920 would arrive too late to seed a crop that would have any chance of ripening. And that was a poor time to have 900 cows to winter and little feed and they lost many cows and paid high prices for any feed they could buy for there were not many strawpiles in those days, today there are none, and the valuable straw is often burned in the field on the stubble or plowed under if not too heavy. This looks like criminal waste to an old fashioned farmer but gets rid of it quickly of course plowing it under is not waste but it would be a much more valuable fertilizer after it had gone through the cow or been used for bedding for hogs.

It was either Thompson or Sheedy who was heard to make the boast that they would soon be buying out all the homesteaders between the lake and Sexsmith and extend the ranch to the railroad and I was thinking of that remark when in 1927 I was helping Jim Burnett at the sale of the ranch goods and chattles when the despised homesteaders, now farmers, were buying the Kleskun Ranch Co. out. Jim Burnett was their last manager.

They had lasted as a ranch from the fall of 1919 to the summer I think it was Aug. 1927 and at one time under Ted Gardiner had as many as 2500 head of cattle. Ted was buying all over the Peace at that time and I met him at Pouce Coupe on his way home from Ft. St. John.

They also had a lease of a little better than half a township in the Bad Heart Country, six miles north and six miles east of the home place, most of the open land in this township had been squatted on in the summer of 1919 by a bunch of returned soldiers who had then put up a holler to have that township open for homesteading and that winter those quarters that had been squatted on were thrown open so that the soldiers could file and so hold their land legally and the Kleskun Ranch got a grazing lease on the rest of the township.

Plenty of trouble could arise from a situation like this, here we have a bunch of returned men, 8 or 10 each with a half section, and holding the best six sections in a 36 section township and an outside ranching company holding the other 30 sections mostly brush and timber, there is sure to be trouble. And there was and soon, the first time the company's men brought in a bunch of cows over the trail that the settlers had cut out to get in themselves, it was the roughest kind of a road and about 10 miles was nothing but poplar stumps, it was known as the "stump road" and the name fitted perfectly and that road was all they had for several years. You can imagine what that stump road looked like after a herd of cattle passed over it in wet weather. Nobby Clarke, a good friend of mine had a half section in that township and there was a very good and plentiful supply of water in a soap hole near the house, very attractive to thirsty cows, many a white-faced moose took his last drink out of Nobbys slough.

Nobby and the company were always feuding and Nobby, is said to have pulled a gun on Ed Thompson in

his office one day and I believe the story for he carried one most of the time and would do the silliest things when loaded with moonshine, I did not like to be around him then.

It was about 1925 that I used my "soldiers grant" and filed on another quarter section of land and this time I was not influenced by the scenery but my attention was drawn to a quarter alongside the Kleskun Ranch home place. Johnny Jones who farmed a mile north told me this quarter was vacant, when I happened to mention that I had not used my soldiers grant yet, I knew this land quite well but I never thought that it had never been filed on, and I imagine other people thought the same way I did not think Johnny could possibly be right but I knew enough not to mention it to anyone else.

The ranch owned the land adjoining it on the north and the west sides, on the south side was a bush and slough quarter still open for filing, this quarter I later filed as a grazing lease, and on the East side was a grazing lease held by Bert Mackey which was soon due to expire and would certainly not be renewed. How this one quarter had remained open is a mystery to me. So the next day I rode horse back to Grande Prairie, I went to the land office and inquired and, sure enough it was open and I filed on it. Next day I went up to Jones place and thanked him for the tip.

This quarter section when I examined it closely contained a ridge of clean and sharp sand which, though there was no demand for it at that time, proved quite valuable a few years later when the country had developed enough so that there was a demand for sand for concrete for basements, foundations, garage floors etc. A few years later and those who had proved up a homestead before a certain year, I forget which year but I qualified anyway, were given the right to file a second homestead and by that time Bert Mackeys grazing lease had expired and had not been renewed and later was thrown open for homesteading and I used my recently acquired 2nd right to file on the N.E. ¼ of that section, I would have preferred the N.W. ¼ as it adjoined the quarter that I already owned but a few years later was able to purchase it and that gave me three quarters in a row and all three facing on the road allowance to the north of them. And that is the way farms grew in the homestead days, and in the meantime I had sold the original homestead, filed in 1916 to Jack Donlon an old friend who worked on the grade at Prudens Crossing, and for the same contractor as I did. Jack had homesteaded close to the Kleskun Lake too but south of the west end of the lake near Andy Murchie. So I now had the three quarters in a row, 480 acres, plenty for a man to make a living from if he brings half of it under cultivation.

To get back to the Tranquility School it operated successfully until we got orders from Wm. Aberhart who was Minister of Education as well as premier, to close the Tranquility school as the children were to be taken to the Sexsmith schools by bus. I have been going into Sexsmith in a nice warm car and passed a bunch of kids waiting on the main road for the bus. Half frozen, there were no shelters, the kids may have been early or the bus, may have been late, I don't know, but I do know that the kids would have been happier and safer on the old horse, and a good long horse would handle four fair sized kids, or on skis and a warm school as soon as they got there than waiting at the crossroads in the snow, I used to wish that Wm. Aberhart was there instead. So much for progress.

As I said, when we saw that we were too short of funds in the dirty thirties we only operated the school for nine months instead of the legal term of 10, it worked and we got away with and no trouble with the department. Eventually I purchased the schoolhouse and used it as a residence on the farm where it is still in use.

Up to this time I had put in the winters trapping as the farm was in the development stage and not producing enough to support me, I knew trapping and liked pitting my wits against those of the foxes and coyotes but I hated taking the beaver, he is such an industrious animal and, intentionally does no one any harm, but if they were not controlled we would be over run with beaver which would not be so good for the beaver either and there is no cruelty attached to the trapping of them as they are caught under water and drown immediately, and in our cold climate there is seldom much cruelty in catching fur animals with the steel trap as the pinched leg usually will quickly freeze, the wire snare which was popular and very effective when first used on the wily coyote, till he caught on to them, is something else, these devices will hold a coyote or a fox for days and he will fight the snare as long as any life remains and a coyote will remain alive, except in very severe weather, and I am talking of temperatures of —20 F and down for five days that I am sure of and head will be twice the natural size and a mass of jelly and the stomach empty. I don't think that a coyote can chew off a crucible steel cable, I used to use ⅜ in. cable which is made up of six small cables twisted together each being composed of 19 fine wires and one coyote that I caught chewed all but five of the 19 fine wires he had been in the snare several days and was dead.

Trapping fur is a cruel business as are some others, including war, but as long as the women demand the animals to adorn themselves and good bounties for killing their rightful owners, so long are men going to bring in the fur. So don't you sobsisters writing in the newspapers put all the blame on the trapper, he would not face the cold and lonely life on the trap line if there was no market for his product. When I went on the trapline, which I did every winter until 1929 the only live stock I owned was four horses and a dog, the dog actually owned me, he was a useless cus but good company and someone to argue with and to blame when things were not going too well, the four horses could rustle in those days and I could turn them loose in the end of October and find them again, fat as seals in the spring, they would feed on the wild peavine and vetch, both climbing plants which climbed on the willow brush and hung above the snow all winter. The horses came in fat alright but they were in no shape to work and needed two weeks on hay and oats and light work before giving them a full days work in the field.

And so I left the East Kleskun district and became a resident of the Tranquility school district, only it was not formed yet, and I remained there for the next forty years when I bought a house in Sexsmith and sold the farm. When I left the original homestead in East



Loghouse on farm, built 1929 by Geo. Robinson. N.E. 19-73-3-6.

Kleskun it was pretty well settled up, much of it had been settled quite early even though it was twenty miles out from Grande Prairie, in my immediate vicinity, besides Sandy Morong who did not last long, he got into trouble, spent a year in jail and never came back. There were the FitzPatricks the father, who died soon after I came back from the army, and there were Jack, Phil and Bill farmers and Pat who was in the saw mill business some years later Pat passed on and Jack took over the mill, Harry Carlin who was married to the FitzPatricks sister, Al Alderman, Ike Boyer, Albert Gray and Bill Secombe and several more whose names I cannot recall, all these to the south of me, there was nobody to the north for three miles, until you got to Dan Gulick's and nobody at all to the west, that was all lake for six miles in 1916, when I returned in 1919 there were a few more quarters filed but not many through the Teepee Creek area, was pretty well settled by 1920. Paddy FitzPatrick operated a saw mill north of Teepee Creek soon after that and it became no longer necessary for homesteaders to build with logs as the local mill was turning out a pretty fair product and there was hardly any log building done after 1925 for the sawn lumber was not so expensive in those days and you could take your own logs to the mill and have them sawn and so cut the cost of your lumber more yet if you wished, and many did this. Many of the early log buildings both houses and barns were buildings that the builders might well be proud of, the Scandinavians were especially skilled in this type of building although there was little to choose between their work and that of the Metis, either could make a wonderful job of a dovetailed corner or a hewed wall and a properly built log building would stay four square and tight and last for many years. There is a log barn, and I don't know who owns it or who built it, it is thirteen sided with each log about twelve feet long and every log dovetailed I have not seen it for some years and never measured it so the length of log I have given may be out, but not far, each corner is carefully dovetailed so there are fourteen dovetailed corners to a round of logs and there are from twelve to fourteen rounds. I leave to your imagination the work and skill involved in framing that roof, I have a good colored slide of the dovetailing but not of the whole structure I am sorry to say. I do not know the reason for building the barn this way nor do I know the builders name but it is a work of art. So far I have not mentioned the S.S.B. the Soldiers Settlement Board set up by the government to help the returned soldier get established on the land if he wished to become a farmer. The board made loans to the man, many of whom had never seen a farm and had only the haziest notion of the work involved in operating a farm and no idea at all of what it meant to establish a farm from raw land and much of it bush.

To get back to the early settlers there were, south of my first homestead and I think all were there when I arrived, North there were no settlers at all for three miles, that is to Dan Gulicks place and besides Gulicks there was Louis Furhman and Bill Kurt and his wife, Louis was a bachelor for another thirty or forty years, north and east of Gulick was a character named Smith who lived in a dugout dug into the lake bank which is about twelve feet high and quite steep and this Smith had dug a square pit into this bank and roofed it over with poplar poles with hay and dirt on top. Smith always wore a bowler hat and went by the name of Cristy Smith part of the time and sometimes was Dugout Smith I never did know his first name and I don't think he ever made any improvements or even attempted to prove it up, he was a big man but did not stay long and I have no idea where he went. There was no Teepee Creek road in those days for the road to Sexsmith was not even brushed out and was not opened up for several years but there was an early store where the Teepee Creek store is still located, it was operated by the Peffers and I think that they were the original store keepers there but I am not sure of this, neither am I sure where the Peffers went when they left, somewhere away up north I believe it was. Most of the Teepee Creek district was settled when I came back from Europe I believe 1917 and 18 saw most of the people come in and they were good settlers and have built a fine district and most of them or their descendants are still occupying the original homesteads and only the grandparents remember the difficulties of travel in those early days when there were no roads of any kind and only a bit of poplar corduroy, placed by the farmers over the worst of the mudholes, it was quite a while before there was a straight road from Teepee Creek to Sexsmith, I think Mr. Taylor was the councillor we have to thank for that, and later Ed Grant for the gravel. We will go back to the Kleskun ranch, the S.S.B. the Soldiers Settlement Board, set up by the government after the war to help the returned soldier get established on the land if he wanted to become a farmer. Personally I am scared to death of debt and so was not tempted to borrow money on which I would have to pay interest, I would rather go it slowly and be my own man, however when I filed on the quarter alongside the company's home ranch I realized how much they would like to own that quarter and no doubt they would watch me very closely to see that I performed all the homestead duties required to prove it up. These were the same as those required to prove up a regular homestead 10 acres broken in each of the first three years, 10 acres in crop the second year and 20 acres in crop the third and final year, so in order to get the protection the S.S.B. would afford me I applied for a small loan, which was granted, and spent it right



Caterpillar plague in 1930. N.E. 18-73-3-6.

away on fencing material. And I always kept $300.00 in the bank so that I could pay off the S.S.B. at any time and I was sitting pretty under the S.S.B. umbrella. Also I kept on the best of terms at all times with the S.S.B. and their inspectors at all times. We were now clear of the Ranch Co. we had bought their goods and chattels in 1927 at the auction sale and it was not very long before the M.D. of Grande Prairie had to take over the unsold land for delinquent taxes and then we were definitely rid of them.

We had a series of good seasons then and no particular worries until the disastrous 1930's arrived, of course the first year or two of hard times did not worry us too much, we were used to hard times developing a farm out of wild land is not the occupation for a man who is going to howl his head off at the first sign of trouble and my neighbours and I had weathered many a storm and we guessed we could take this one too. But we were not figuring on six or seven years of it and neither was anybody else for that matter. Here in the Peace we were in a different situation from the grain farmers in Saskatchewan, a much better situation for we could hunt moose and deer for meat, bear for lard, and birds for a change and we grew good gardens too and shipped several car loads to Saskatchewan to help, a good meal comes mostly out of the garden and most farmers here kept a few hogs and a pig weighing 220 lbs. brought about $3.20 on the market so it did not cost the farmer too much to butcher one for the house. Most people had enough ambition to put in a garden but not all, there are some who have energy enough to open their mouth if they see something good to eat but just too lazy to close it if you put food in for them, we had a fellow like this in our locality he was asked one spring if he could use some seed potatoes which were all ready cut and his neighbour had cut more than he needed or had the ground for. No thanks said this man I don't grow spuds if it doesn't rain, there won't be much any way and if it does the neighbours will have a lot more than they need. This was a family man too, and it was the man who made the offer who told me.

I hate writing about those dirty thirties and would much rather forget them, but they should not be forgotten, they taught us many a lesson and lessons learned at such a cost should be remembered, at least long enough to hand on to the next generation. We, on established farms were the lucky ones and suffered the least for there was so much that we could provide for ourselves where the people making their living in the towns and cities could not, they needed the cash for everything that they had to have, if they did not have the cash they went without or went into debt, we could and did patch our clothes until there was a greater area of patch than of original material and we bachelors were not too handy with the needle and thread nor too fussy about matching materials or colours either for that matter and so long as we could cover our nakedness and feep warm who was to criticize, not your neighbour he probably looked worse, though if a married man the sewing was neater and the patches in a little better taste than we bachelors as most wives were fussier and handier with a needle than we were. And the trading that was carried out during those days.

Most of the trading originated at the flour mill or one of the local saw mills which sounds odd but is true enough, the flour mill was in Sexsmith and was run by the Warren family and had been operating for several years and turning out very good flour too, I had used lots of it and I liked it, but it was a wee bit off colour when compared with flour brought in from Edmonton and made by the big mills, but when the depression hit us in the 1930s you heard no more criticism of the Sexsmith flour, it was suddenly every bit as good and probably more nutritious than the brands brought in from outside. The mill was a wood burner and used quite a lot of firewood and the miller, Mr. Warren used to buy firewood from the farmers for cash and when the depression came along he would trade flour, bran, shorts or some other product of the mill for a load of firewood and when the farmer brought in a truckload or a wagonload of wheat to be ground for flour and the by-products so much was deducted for the cost of grinding and bagging which was the millers share and the farmer got the balance in the form of flour, bran, shorts, ground wheat, etc. The millers share could be sold in town to people who did not grow wheat and the farmer had a lot more of the different products than he needed for his own use which he used for trading and at the sawmills things worked in a similar wat the men working in the mill took so many board feet of lumber for a days work and then, in the evenings the crew would play poker with lumber and the man who had

cards good enough for openers would cry out "she is opened for 100 feet or so" depending on how big the game was, it was played as an ordinary poker game except the players would bet 100 feet or 1000 feet. This proved very poor business for the saw mill owner as the crew had to convert their wooden wages into cash if they wanted to buy cigarettes or underwear or any of the many things a man working in the bush needs and has to have, and a man who owns 20,000 ft. of lumber but needs a pair of sox is going to sell some cheap lumber in order to get the cash to buy the sox, $7.50 would often buy a thousand ft. of good lumber if you met a man who worked in a sawmill and under the right circumstances and if you had the $7.50 you would probably get it for less if it was cigarettes that he was out of. You could hardly call this bootlegging but it made it very difficult for the saw mill owner to sell his lumber for cash which he had to keep the mill operating, and all he would be asking for his lumber would be $15.00 per thousand. Those were good times to get some building done on a new farm but the sticker was getting hold of that little bit of cash and even if you could get the lumber by trading you still had to have nails, bolts and other hardware and that took hard cash which made it difficult again. I never hauled any wheat or firewood to the mill but I always had a ton of mill products on hand for trading purposes. It was too bad that the mill burned for I liked their product and it showed that the Peace River wheat is as good as any, which has been proved many times on the show benches and the Sexsmith mill has proved it on the dinner too.

Another trade I remember making in those days was with Jack LaMarr, Jack had a small shingle mill in the bush north of Teepee Creek, I never did know his exact location, he had 3 or 4 men and they felled the trees sawed them into shingle bolts, then put them to the shingle saw and then hauled them to the customer, if they had one. At the time I had a large pig barn for farrowing sows, I was as usual, working alone, I was building with squared timbers and getting the timbers up onto the walls by sliding them up two poles with a horse and a long rope, I had one mare that I always used when I had work to do with one horse alone, and Maud was a dandy and seemed to know what I wanted done and was willing to do it if possible, she would try anything I asked her to and she was a general favorite with anyone who worked my horses. I had to buy the timbers I was using and as I paid cash I was pretty well broke at the time. I had the rafters cut to frame the roof and the boards to put on the rafters but there was nothing to put on the boards. I knew Jack LaMarr well but had no idea where he was and did not know there was a shingle mill in the district and it was Jack's business. And who should show up but Jack himself and with a load of shingles in a hay rack. He wanted to know if I could give him dinner and feed his team, then, when we were eating, came his tale of woe, he had a crew working in the bush making shingles and they were going to have to quit because they were running out of groceries, he was all right for groceries as the storekeeper would be needing shingles soon but they had to have meat now and he had to have cash to get meat. I sympathized with him, he was sure in a hell of a fix and I would like to help him out but I,



Taken at midnight Dec. 25th, 1934 after Christmas at Ed Grants.

at the moment was very short of cash and I did have some pigs that were about ready for market and after dinner we came to a deal and Jack got a pig and I got a hayrack full of loose shingles which was more than I needed for the pig barn, several thousand more and delivered on the job. I might have got $7.00 for the pig and I would have had to pay over $30.00 for enough shingles to cover that roof, jackpine shingles are not as good as the cedar that I would have got in the lumber yard in town but that roof was still tight when I sold the farm thirty years later. I forget what year it was that I built that pigbarn but it was in one of the depression years 1935 or 36 and prices of everything, or nearly everything was at rock bottom, I don't recall much of a drop in interest or taxes but No. 1 wheat was 19 cents in the elevator at Sexsmith at one time, and oats brought 5 cents a bushel, and I sold top grade hogs weight 220 lbs. for $3.50 each, and one at the same time that I butchered for the Chinese restaurant in Sexsmith brought $5.00 imagine 5 whole bucks, a wonderful price. But that 5 bucks would have bought twenty meals in that cafe so things were not so far out of line for that matter. Also that five bucks invested in farm labour would have paid a good man cutting brush or picking roots for five days, you would have had to board him, but that did not cost much. We were fortunate in the weather during the worst depressions years and grew splendid crops of vegetables and were

able and happy to send a few carloads to Saskatchewan farmers who had to contend with drought during the depression years as well as their other troubles. I have not mentioned a work of politics so far in this story but that does not mean that we did not take a keen interest in such matters and I had been a Liberal for several years, first because it was the only way open to me to make the Tories pay for what they had done to the Kleskun Lake in listening to Ed Thompson & Co. and handing the lake over to them, instead of investigating the feasibility of their proposition first, while I was overseas, and once a Liberal I stayed that way because they have done more for Canada than the competition and made fewer mistakes doing it. My friend Al Alderman told me that there was going to be a Provincial Liberal convention to be held in Spirit River and would I like to attend, that was in 1923, I said yes, but how were we to get to Spirit River? Al said he could fix that as he could get a car from Jack Thompson who operated a Chev. garage in Grande Prairie and was going to Spirit River and was going to be a candidate.

In 1923 there were few cars in the Peace River District and mighty few garages and none between Grande Prairie and Spirit River and only a dry weather road, we should worry, there were three of us now as Al who was the only one who could drive had invited another young homesteader to come along, another good strong back to push if necessary was not a bad idea, it had been dry for some time and the road should be dry even if it was a bit rough. We were due there by two and had about 50 miles to drive so we had to get a good early start which we did, and the model "T" Ford which Jack provided did a heroic job and got us to Spirit in time to have a lunch before the convention. W. A. Rae, a lawyer, had been the sitting member, he was a Liberal too but he was sitting too much of the time and we wanted a change, we wanted the Liberals back in alright but we didn't want Rae and we knew he intended to run. We went to the hall, it had been hired by the Liberal Association and probably by Rae himself, and we found the door locked and guarded inside by a lot of Rae men, mostly Metis and undoubtedly hired for the occasion. We had to get in, but how, the frame building was two story and on one corner there was a downspout carrying the water from the evestrough and a Grande Prairie plumber who came as a delegate for Thompson said he thought he could climb it and there was sure to be an entrance to the attic, he tried it and was successful and he proved to be the hero of the day, came down the stairs, pushed his way through the Rae men around the door and opened it from the inside. There must have been at least 30 of us Thompson delegates by that time waiting to get in and as soon as the plumber (I wish I could remember his name) showed at the door we rushed it and the Rae men did not stop to fight. The meeting was not even called to order when a Rae man got up and called for Rae delegates to leave the hall as another hall had been hired and he told them where and they left, all fifteen of them. And so there were two Liberal conventions in Spirit River that day instead of one and all the Rae delegates signed his nomination paper which was said to be like a war cemetery in France, row upon row of crosses.

That evening there was a terrific thunder storm came up from the west, we saw it coming and supperless we struck out for Clairmont and if we got through the Burnt Hills we might miss the storm altogether. We didn't make it, and the storm caught us as we got into the bush south of Rycroft, and what a storm that was, but we had a Model T, and the Model T was made for rough going, we got down the Burnt River hill but in trying to climb up the other bank, about 200'' in elevation and probably ½ a mile long we burned out a connecting rod and we were done, so far as the automobile was concerned and we were some 35 miles from home, it was raining cats and dogs. As we were coming down the Burnt hill I thought that I saw a faint light in the bush on the west side and as there was nothing else suggested we went to investigate luckily the days were still long and though we were in dense bush we still had a little light and near the top of the hill we had recently come down, to our relief we saw the light which proved to be that of a candle in the window of a log cabin. It was the home of a Mr. Murray with a wife and several small children and they made us welcome and fed us what they had as was the custom of the country still in the '20's. The supper was mostly out of the bush and garden and suited us fine for we were homesteaders first and politicians last. Next morning they fed us some more moosemeat and we hiked up the Burnt River to where the railway bridge had to be and it proved to be about a mile, though tramping through the wet bush it seemed like 10 miles. Lightning struck the town of Spirit River that night and half the town burned down and the Poor old Liberals got the blame for that, now they may have had a big time when the convention was over but burn the town down, no they were not in the mood for that. The result of that election? Neither Rae nor Thompson came close and a school inspector name of Farr a complete stranger to us got in handily.

We did not have to wait more than a couple of hours at the Burnt River before the roadmaster came along on a speeder and he, very reluctantly gave us a ride to near Sexsmith and from there we got to Clairmont and so home, about 14 miles east, and that was that last time that I went to a convention for several years, Jack Thompson had to drive to the Burnt River when the road dried up and take a mechanic to fix the model T and drive it home to Grande Prairie, and on election day neither Thompson or Rae, with the Liberal vote split, got anywhere and an outsider, a school inspector name of Farr took the seat. But that was politics before the county was opened up. Soon we had a graded road on the road allowance north of Tp. 73-3-6 and a few culverts too so our road to Sexsmith was at least a straight one and we did not have to go around the ends of the coulees or out of our way around patches of willow and poplar and mudholes, farther east to Teepee Creek and north took a bit longer as it was mostly swamp on the road allowance past Carl Alms place, and Carl Alm is still living on his original homestead although he is now over 100 years old. And soon we had graded roads to Sexsmith on the north side of the Kleskun Lake township 73-4-6. And on the south side to Clairmont, both were now straight and graded but it was many more years before either one had a shovelful of gravel on it, but it helped a lot to have a straight road for every foot the road was

shortened was a help when hauling grain with horses which was the way it was done in those years. In the winter we people living on the east side of the Kleskun Lake had a good level trail as soon as the lake was frozen also it was four miles shorter as we did not have to go the two miles north to the township line to avoid the lake, it was four miles shorter which was nice, but it was a mighty cold five miles. For me the summer road was 33 miles for the round trip and in winter across the lake 25 miles. Shorter and level and the horses appreciated that but in bad weather it was a mighty cold trip for the driver, now it has grown up to willow and would not be so bad, but nobody hauls grain with horses any more and has not for forty years, but in the 1920s we had to and on a January day and the wind rise after you had left home it was a very cold trip and one was mighty glad to get off the lake. Of course in January and December we had to start two hours before daylight in order to get home before dark and I hate to even recall those winter mornings even after fifty years. What difference today with a warm truck cab and a good road and fifty miles an hour and a load of 300 bushels instead of 80 bushels.

In the spring the lake would flood with the run off water for, as mentioned earlier ten creeks fed it only one 10 ft. ditch emptied it and the water would rise on the east side to about the same height as before the ditches were dug. This fooled a lot of the water birds who would build their nests in the shallow water and grass on the east side of the lake following the habits of unnumbered generations before them, not knowing what had been done to their ancestral home by the Kleskun Lake Co. and so they built their nests at the time and place that Mother Nature told them to, they had no reason to mistrust her, she had never lied to them before, but this summer was for some reason different. The eggs were only half hatched and the water was going and before hatching was completed it was dry, the mother duck had never seen anything like this before and she was hatched here herself and here she had had her own brood last spring, and though the water had gone down as it always had, naturally, by evaporation, which was the reason she had built the nest some distance from the shore, though she did not know this, and she finished the brooding and there were eight new ducks on the Kleskun Lake, but these little ones had to have water to live and knew it, but where was the water? There had been enough here last night to provide a drink but now it was gone and she had to find it and fast, she took to the wing, it was not where it had been last night when she had taken her evening flight but she found some about half a mile west of the nest and she flew back to the nest and her brood, she got them out of the nest and lined up after a style, but a day old Mallard duckling has very short legs and does not make very fast time when on foot and they had not gone a hundred yards when a magpie spotted them, swooped down and grabbed the one in the rear and then a marsh hawk got two more and the old bird went on with the five survivers. To make a painful story short she got to where there was a little water with one of the eight she started with, and this tragic story was repeated many times in the next few years and with many species of water birds.

And the muskrats too, which before the draining were a sure source of a grubstake for quite a few of the early settlers around the lake needed water but unlike the birds, they needed it the year round and deep enough so that it did not freeze. Before it was drained these conditions were provided by some deep holes a little to the west of the centre of the lake which could not be drained at any time. In the summer the rats made their homes most all over the lake and in fall and winter had houses and bank holes and draining or the attempt to drain upset conditions for the muskrats too and reduced them to a few left in the deep holes and a few in bank holes in the main ditch. I am rather hazy regarding the date but I believe it was in the very late thirties that "Ducks Unlimited" became interested in the Kleskun Lake and they sent their general manager out to have a look, it was Mr. Tom Main, and his report must have interested his board of directors for some time later he returned and this time he carried a contract that he was empowered to sign with the council of the M.D. of Grande Prairie No. 739. This time he contacted me, I had a boat and he wanted me to take him around the lake and show him what I could, which I did, and the next day we were out almost from daylight to dark. I had not used the boat since the summer before so I soon got blistered hands as I had no motor and being unaccustomed to the rowing, I was dog tired long before we got back at supper time. But Tom Main saw all he wanted to see and he told me that the Kleskun Lake was finest proposition for their purpose that he had ever seen and he had inspected many lakes and marshes, he was a very interesting man to be out with but I never met him again. It was spring and I had got my crop seeded but the lake was pretty well full still and no crop would be seeded on lake land that year and I saw that Tom made a note of that, then he let me read the deal he was offering the council the next day. There were a few quarter sections which the company had sold to farmers which would be flooded when the dam which the "Ducks Unlimited" would build to bring the water up to the original and hold it there, those quarters on the edge of the lake such as those east of the fourth range line would not be affected except that the dam would prevent the spring flood from reaching them.

The following is the deal that the council were offered and turned down: — The municipality must acquire the few quarters out in the lake which would be flooded. That was all they had to do, this should not be too difficult, assessment roll could be used if the owner became difficult. And this is what "Ducks Unlimited" would do: — Do all the engineering work, surveying etc. Build the dam necessary to hold the water at its original level. They would police it while the muskrats were increasing to a sufficient number that would attract trapper leases. And then give the whole thing back to the M.D. 739.

And they turned that down. What future there can be for what was once one of the best wildlife habitat in the west is problematical, I am told that the county has it now as a community pasture. I am also told that is not very successful and I can well believe that as I can well remember the bulldog flies and the mosquitoes when I used to put up hay there and I most certainly would not like to be a horse and have to be out

there all summer. The only solution that I can see is that the Ducks Unlimited, dam it up and turn it into a muskrat preserve and in 10 or 20 years rent it by the section to trappers, it will produce fish too, I have caught lots of them in the Kleskun Creek in the spring and they were heading for the lake, undoubtedly to spawn which was a wasted effort as they never could get back to the Smoky, for the Kleskun Creek, the only way out was dry by July.

MAGGIE SIMPKINS

We left Rimby in July of 1933, with a team, wagon and all our belongings piled in, and two horses, a colt, and a dog following behind. There was Grover, myself, and my sister, Helen Gardiner, Riley, age 11, Mickey Alvin, and Jeano, age 4. It was a good summer with no mosquitoes, no rain, and we slept right on the ground under the stars.

It was a good holiday with fishing, visiting with other travelers, and looking for a place to settle. We crossed the rivers on ferries, and we all got out and stood by the wagon. The horses weren't afraid. The colt stood close by its mother and the dog stayed under the wagon. The only repairs we had with us, was a hunk of haywire and a pair of old pliers, which we never had to use.

At the Athabasca River, the Negro settlement was having a picnic, and we joined in and had a good time. We looked at a farm for sale there. It had a nice house, barn, two quarters of land and was only $300. But after three days of looking, Grover decided to go farther North. Two months had gone by when we reached High Prairie and a heavy frost hit. It froze all the gardens, and we knew we had to find a place pretty soon.

We crossed the Smoky River and arrived at P. G. Rooney's Store with only $10 left. Mr. Rooney told us about a house on the old Regnier Place. The Proffitt family had just moved out. The sod roof house was just like heaven and there was a barn for the horses. The first day we were there, Mary McNally came to visit. She told us all about the district and where the school was. The school was so far away, the kids couldn't go, so they learned their lessons at home.

I was baking bread a few days before Christmas, when a team drove in with sleigh bells ringing. Mr. and Mrs. Roy Ames came in with toys, food, cake, candies and books, just like Santa Claus. It was a good Christmas.

We moved up to the Ted Coney place the next year so the kids could go to the Fitzsimmons School. Strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries grew right close to the door. We had a good garden and filled all our sealers. Grover went threshing with Wes Brewer for ten days for $30. He took wheat instead of money, taking it to Lee Warren in Sexsmith, and had it made into flour, bran, and cracked wheat for porridge. We had a little hand grinder from Wes Brewer, which we used to grind wheat for the pigs.

Our next son Willard was born in April of 1936, and Ben arrived in 1939.

We moved to the Martel Place and then to the Jack Peppin house. That was the first time I saw Kleskun Lake. Ben was a year old now. The older kids went to school at Tranquility. We bought a milk cow from George Robinson, and called her Old Pansy. She had teats like leather mitts and almost as big, but gave lots of milk and cream. That was the start of herding cows on Kleskun Lake, which went on for 25 years. Old Pansy always had daughters and her daughters had daughters. I took my sewing, washing, magazines and tea with me, and out to the Lake we went every morning with Old Pansy in the lead. I enjoyed going out there, and it was nothing to see a bear fooling around the dredge ditch. When evening came, we all went home.

When the wind came up, it blew ashes from the Lake fire. It burned our eyes and made the cows eyes run. We milked eight cows and separated, taking the cream down to Brown's Corner where it was picked up and taken to Grande Prairie.

When haying time came, Grover and I would stack while Willard, although very small, would mow, and Ben still smaller would herd the cows. When winter came, we played cards and read books and magazines by the coal oil lamps.

We could hear the squeal of the loads of hay going by, which were coming from the Lake. Fred Vinet, Ruches and Bob White were some of farmers from Fitzsimmons who put up hay on the Lake.

We moved to the Calliou Place. It wasn't a happy time, as we lost Helen and later Grover. Riley, and Mickey left for the Army and Alvin and Jeano left for school. Riley and Mickey have passed on, Jeano lives in Edmonton.

Willard, Ben and I bought the Nelson Place in 1958, where we have lived ever since. We went modern with power, trucks, and tractors. But the old days were the best days, although there's not too many old-timers left now.

DOROTHY W. SMITH

I was about ten years old when my grandfather Lymon Porter Sutley died. He had been a pioneer most of his life as was his father, who had moved from Pennsylvania to Ohio in the early 1800's. My grandfather Sutley went from Ohio to Indiana; from Indiana to Nebraska; from Nebraska to the Dakotas; and from the Dakotas to the Red Deer area, where he finally settled somewhere between Calgary and Edmonton in 1901 or 1902. At the same time, his sons bought and took up land nearby. My uncle Ben Sutley, the father of Ben Sutley of Crooked Creek, married and raised his family there. My Mother, Mary Jane Winder (born October 3, 1866 in Nebraska, U.S.A.) who was alone with me, decided to move to Canada from California where we were living at the time. She wanted to be near the rest of her family, her brothers Ben, Seth, and Vet Sutley.

We arrived at Mirror, Alberta late in the winter of 1915, and we lived with Aunt Jean and Uncle Ben while mother investigated farms which were for sale in the area. However, on the way from California she was caught in the excitement of the advertisements about the Peace River country, and in spite of the arguments from her brothers she finally decided to investigate the Grande Prairie area for land. She had been left an inheritance and felt secure that she could make a "go" of homesteading.

Our trip over the new Edmonton, Dunvegan & British Columbia Railroad was a exciting one for me. To watch the rails disappear and reappear in the mud along Lesser Slave Lake as our train crawled along was fascinating. Occasionally we would see a moose or some birds along the right of way, but otherwise nothing but trees and muskeg. I think it took about two or three days to get to Grande Prairie. We had to stop over in Spirit River one night while the train went to the Peace River area and returned to pick up the passengers going to Grande Prairie. I remember we stayed in a hotel cubicle made with unpainted lumber partitions which went only part way to the roof. People could be heard talking in the other cubicles. The hotel in Grande Prairie was not much different. We had a room on the second floor. I was intrigued by the outhouse attached to the second floor rear porch. Through the cracks it seemed a long way to the ground.



Mary Peebles, Ray Winders and Dorothy Smith.

A land "locator" took mother and me by buggy to the Gulick ranch, located on the east side of Kleskun Lake, later the site of the Kleskun Lake Ranch. Here I also found many exciting things. The Gulicks trapped during the winter, and I saw my first silver fox fur at their place. They had coyote, wolf, and fox pelts as well as muskrat and weasel skins. I also saw herds of horses. Later I learned that many of these horses were wild. They had been turned loose by people going north for the gold rush of earlier days.

Mother filed on the S.E. quarter of 36-73-4-W. of the 6th and proceeded to build the first frame house in the area. She bought "dry" lumber from both Sexsmith and Grande Prairie. She had two very good carpenters build the house, which consisted of two layers of lumber on the outside with building paper between and two layers on the inside with building paper between. There was a double floor with paper between the layers. The roof was shingled, and we had a brick chimney. (The brick was made locally.) The house still stands and is in relatively good condition.

There was only one trouble. When the house — including the chimney — was almost completed, mother found that it had been built on the wrong quarter. (Our "locator" had thought the surveyor's stake was at the north corner instead of the south corner of the quarter.) The house stood about where the Simpkin's house now stands. Part of the chimney had to be taken down (for fear it would fall) and with two four-horse teams the house was moved almost half a mile on log rollers which were put under it by the men as the house moved forward.

We were now no longer near Kleskun Creek, which we had hoped would be our water supply for part of the year. We were without close water.

During the several months the house was being built we lived in a large tent with all of mother's possessions in crates inside. The tent was put up very near where Milneck later built his house. There was an unnamed creek there where we got our water. This was about two miles from where the house was being built.

When we finally moved from our tent, half our possessions were in the house and half in the tent. Mother decided I should stay at the house because my bed was there. Mother would finish packing things at the tent to move the next day. There was a full moon, and all night just outside my window the coyotes howled. The house had been built on top of a coyote den! At age ten I was a frightened child. I felt very much alone.

Our first winter was very mild — if it hadn't been I'm not sure what might have happened. When the snow got deep, we found it difficult to haul dry downed trees to the house by ourselves on foot. Mother and I used a short crosscut saw or a buck saw — the crosscut was hard to handle — for our wood. It seemed we spent most of our time cutting wood or melting snow for water. Mother had laid in several hundred pound sacks of flour, a hundred pound sack of brown sugar, a hundred pound sack of white sugar, and some beans. We relied on having the Gulicks bring other supplies from town or else we went to the Teepee Creek store, which was run then by the Pfeffers, I think. During the fall Mother had bought our first horse, Jim, as well as a buggy and a cutter. She found neither very practical, since most people used teams, and the trip to Sexsmith was too hard on one horse. Sexsmith at that time was really only a store-post-office-livery-stable-place with Dave Sexsmith as proprietor. I can't remember anything more about the town.

Mother used our tent for a roof on the single board structure where Jim was stabled the first winter. I remember we had a number of red winged blackbirds there too for most of the winter.

Our first spring on the homestead (1917) found numbers of ducks nesting in our yard. We also found the house was surrounded by water, so our feet were constantly wet until the middle of summer. The ducks, geese, and whooping cranes filled the evenings and early mornings with sound.

We got drinking water from sloughs near the house. Mother strained the wigglers and dirt out through several thicknesses of muslin and then boiled the water we drank. The mosquitoes were so thick we

couldn't go out of the house without gloves, heavy clothing and mosquito netting.

In the spring of 1917 Mother began fencing her homestead and started a feud with the Gulicks. They were unhappy to see their open range begin to disappear. Also the road to town ran across the only openings of mother's homestead, and she planned to break this land for crops. She had a right of way for a new road cut through the trees so that there would still be a way to town. The new road ran up between Mother's place and the Taylor homesteads. (The Taylors came in about the same time as Mother.) This road is now a range line road. Knobby Clark fanned the flames of the feud when he went to live with the Gulicks. He would open Mother's gates and leave them open whenever he used our road. We thought our horse Jim was badly cut up by being driven into the wire fence by the Gulicks or by Knobby Clark.

My brothers Raymond and Lymon Winder arrived fresh from college in California in May or June of 1917. Both had been rejected by the Army because of health problems, so they decided to farm. Since Jim had been cut up, my brothers and I carried their suitcases from Milke's homestead three or three and a half miles by the road. We fought mosquitoes all the way.

In 1917 and 1918 many veterans settled in the area. The Blaneses, Sorkens, Mackeys, and Hollingsworths moved in as well as Mickey Felton, Jimmy Robinson, Tom Jones and Mr. Clarke, the West Indian who later made a name for himself as a peony botanist. Prior to this time Carl Alm, Jimmy Luther, the Gulicks, and Melkes were our only close neighbors.

Our first crop consisted of six acres of wheat. We had some of it ground for flour. The rest we used to feed pigs and chickens.

We hauled our drinking water in barrels from Melnick's creek. Later my brothers made a wagon tank out of two-by-twelves, most of which still remain at the farm. We filled the tank from a pail, which we carried up a hill from the water hole.

In about 1920 or 1921 we had Foster drill us a well. He used a forked willow twig to decide on the site. The well was about 250 feet deep, and it still flows. The winter before we had the well we had to drive our forty head of stock to Kleskun Creek, where we cut ice about four feet deep and watered the cattle from a shallow ice trough after dipping the water up through the ice with a pail. It was a cold job to lie on our stomachs on the ice for fifteen or twenty minutes at a time when it was thirty to forty degrees below zero.



Gas delivery truck, barrels were filled in shed.

Mr. Melke gave me his dog, Bozo, when we first came to the country. "Old Melkes" was known for his ability to be heard several miles away as he ploughed his fields. He always had eggs in the winter. He shared his cabin with his chickens and had some difficulty in keeping them off the table.

Jimmy Luther lived near Milkes. He had no floor in his cabin. The thing I remember most about him is that he kept his table clean by putting a new layer of newspaper on top of old dirty ones. It looked as if there were several inches of accumulated newsprint on top of his table.

We had to be extremely careful in driving over the road between Melke's place and ours. A large section of land near Melke's place was covered with soapholes. Some of these appeared nearly covered with grass but a heavy load would break the top sod and mire a wagon. Our first cow which we had purchased from Jim Johnson tried to get back to his place. She got caught in a soap hole and only her head was visible. We got her out but she never calved again.

In the summer of 1918 or 1919 I went to school for the first time since leaving Mirror. Miss Moody, the daughter of the cattle buyer, was our first teacher. Fred Nelson had built a log cabin half a mile north of the Sorken's house. This was the first North Kleskun School. Adolf, Carl, Mabel and Sig Sorken; Clarence, Hazel, Edna, and Oscar Blanes; and I were the students for the three months — June, July, and August — school was in session. The following year we were joined by Maurice, Yvonne, and Eve Pronovost and for awhile by Glen Morrison. Toward the end of the second summer the Kirts moved across the creek from the Kleskun Lake Ranch buildings (the old Gulick place), and I drove Juanita Kirt to school until school closed. Juanita married my brother Lymon many years later. Our teacher was Meta Lively. The next year our teacher was Mr. Allison. He boarded with the Adair family. Among other things he played the violin and taught us singing. That year I passed my grade IX examinations.

There was great excitement the day the first car came bouncing over the road mother had cleared to the Gulick place. This was on the occasion that the Gulick place was taken over by the Kleskun Ranch Company. Shortly after the Company begain ditching the Kleskun Lake into Kleskun Creek, about 1922. We used the ditch for skating that winter. In the spring the Company brought in several hundred Herefords and pastured them in the area where the Simpkins now live. That winter my brothers trapped muskrats on the Lake, but the next year the muskrats moved into the banks of the ditches and were harder to get. Lymon and I set our trapline south and east the next year and we caught mainly weasels. My brother Raymond's health gave out and I took his place in the outside work much of the time.

I can remember the first Teepee Creek picnic. (1924-25?) It was the forerunner of the Teepee Creek Stampedes. Hollingsworths, Sonny Leyland and

several others raced their horses up around the buildings and back. We had a dance in the old log Teepee Creek School house. Dances in those days were family affairs. Small children danced with their parents and sleeping babies were draped on benches around the sides of the building. There were always plenty of sandwiches and cake. Coffee was produced from a wash boiler heated on an open fire outside. Liquor was no problem. Everyone had a wonderful time without it!

About that time some duck hunters from Sexsmith were careless with a campfire and set Kleskun Lake afire. The haystacks of many settlers were burned, and the muskeg burned all that winter. A wind blew up and drove the fire directly toward our homestead. We were all packed to leave when the fire hit the timber between us and where the Simpkins now live. We set a backfire to save our buildings. This split the fire, part of which went north of our house and part south. The fire burned in the Smoky area for weeks. During that time we were constantly putting out ground fires which smouldered in burned-over areas. Since then I've had a healthy respect for fire.

The rabbits came in hundreds that winter to eat the upland hay we had in stacks near the buildings. We finally had to throw wire around the stacks. We drove the snowshoe rabbits into pens at night and clubbed them by the dozens in order to save the hay for our stock.

One winter because of the deep snow we were unable to get to town. The snow came in August while our grain was still stooked in the fields. We had not put in our winter supplies, as we were waiting for threshing. We threshed wheat by hand to get enough wheat to cook until the roads were cleared. The wheat took hours to cook, but it was delicious with sugar and milk. Except for the tedious task of getting enough wheat to cook we felt really fortunate.

We ran out of kerosene for our lamp. Mother made a wick from string and cloth. This was put in a bowl full of fat. The light was smoky but at least we could see.

Most of our cattle stayed outside during the winter since we didn't have enough barns. I used to milk the cows any place they might be. One night when the moon was full and it was as light as day with the snow reflecting its light, I became aware of an additional glow. I looked up to see a huge ball of fire in the northeastern sky. It seemed to stand still like a second moon — it was about the same size. I watched it for several minutes, it seemed like, until it finally disappeared through the trees in the area of the Badheart. I've since decided it must have been a meteor.

In 1924 I went to California where I attended school and trained as a nurse. In 1927 I returned home when my brother Raymond became seriously ill. That year I plowed and planted seventeen acres of oats for him. The yield was 117 bushels per acre. I hired a truck to haul the grain to town. The farmers were still hauling with horses. No one had a truck. Dr. Gamey spent one night with us when Raymond finally broke down. We took Raymond to a sanitarium in Calgary. He died there in May, 1932. He was 34. My mother left the home place after Lymon married Juanita. She also went to Calgary, where she died in 1942. She was 76.

I married a research chemist in 1937 in California, where I had been doing social work after I finished college. My daughter Helen was born in 1944, her sister Barbara, in 1946. Until recently Helen was a computer programmer and systems designer. Barbara, who married in 1969, works at the University of California in the School of Education, where she is an administrative assistant.

In 1971 I returned to mother's homestead. Since then I have been attempting to rebuild the depleted soil and fallen buildings. The old house has a new roof and foundation, and the soil is again beginning to respond. There is now a thick stand of poplar trees where we pulled willow crowns up by hand in the old pasture lake bottom after the lake fire. These 80 acres have grown up to wilderness where wild roses, saskatoons, partridge, and bear live, a little bit of wilderness in the now too well-cleared surrounding country.

THE ADOLPH SORKEN FAMILY

Adolph was born on his Grandfather's homestead near Sioux Falls, South Dakota, U.S.A. on April 6, 1906. He came to the Peace River Country in November of 1916, with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Sorken, two brothers and one sister.



Adolf Sorken driving the tractor from the binder.

I was born, Mary Smith, in February, 1920 at Gisburn, Yorkshire, England, and came to Sexsmith in April, 1926 with my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Smith, two sisters, and one brother.

In 1924, Adolph filed on the S.W. of 31-73-3-W. 6, one and a half miles north of the Tranquility School. Later he bought two more quarters of land, one from Nels Arneson, and one from Mr. C. Clark, which he had rented for some years before.

Adolph and I were married in December of 1938 and moved to his homestead. 1938 was a very dry year, grain went about five bushels to the acre.

Our closest neighbours were the Lyman Winder family, Mr. C. M. Clark, Johnny Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Taylor and their son Harold.

Adolph did commercial grinding and wood sawing in the winter for about 8 years, some prior to 1938. He

had a Model T car fixed up to drive the grinder and saw, and went from farm to farm grinding and sawing. He worked an area from around H. Gilles in Mount Star district, to Mr. C. Whites in Teepee Creek. He charged $1.59 to $1.75 per wagon box of grain, and $1.25 per hour wood sawing. This included himself and the outfit.

We hauled water by tank for the cattle from Fred and Nels Nelsen's until 1946 when we had a dam dug. After two unsuccessful tries at drilling a well, we succeeded in 1976.

Although my first attempt at raising poultry wasn't too good, we raised and sold turkeys for some years. The first summer I was here, Mr. Taylor gave me four setting hens, I raised three chicks from these hens that summer. We butchered and sold quite a few turkeys for some years, but in 1948 we had over 100 and found it was too many to butcher, so we loaded them alive and shipped them to the Poultry Producers in Grande Prairie.

There were a lot of skunks around years ago and I



Adele, Tom, Marilyn and Carolyn Sorken with one horse power sleddoo.

remember one night waking up with our eyes burning. Adolph got up to see what was wrong. The dog had a skunk on the step. Adolph couldn't open the door, since the skunk may have come in, so he crawled through the window and was able to kill it with an old boot.

Our four oldest children attended the Tranquility School. They had some very dedicated teachers who drove to school shoveling through snowbanks in winter and bucking mud in spring. When the roads were blocked or impassable they stayed in a wee shack at the school. School was held regardless of weather in those days. Adolph took Carolyn to school one morning in February of 1947 when it was 72 degrees below zero. I believe that was the coldest day ever recorded in this country.

Adolph bought a pony, named Peggy, from an Indian family in the fall of 1949 for $15. She became part of the family, and was the childrens means of transportation to school, the store, and anywhere they visited.

Our family is all married now. Carolyn is married to Rode Mcleod. They have one son, Wade, and three daughters, Marilyn, Eleanor and Roberta. Marilyn, our second oldest, was married to Grant Hill in October, 1959, and passed away six weeks later. Tom, our only son, married Darlene Lawrence in 1968. They have one son, Dwayne, and two daughters, Jo-Ella and Karrilyn. Adele became the bride of Leslie Fraser in 1963, and has three daughters, Brenda, Patsy, and Lorrie. This romance was nearly broken by Linda's pet nannygoat, the first time Leslie came calling in his brand new car. The nanny decided to investigate the car by jumping up on the hood of the car, walking over the roof and trunk, then down. She did this each time he came, until she realized Leslie was very persistent, and gave up. Our youngest girl Linda, married Ray Ogden in 1969.

Tom bought two quarters from us in 1976. We are now semi-retired and still living on our homestead, although all our old neighbours have moved or passed on.

NORMAN AND NINA TALBOT

Life at Kleskun Lake, in Cree meaning "white mud".

Norman and I sold our first farm at Spring Lake, now Dimsdale, which we filed on in 1910, as South African Script and homestead — to Mr. Crane Williams, in June, 1929. I don't remember the selling price. We bought a section of raw land from the Kleskun Lake Cattle Company, dealing with lawyers Dyde and Dyde of Edmonton. I don't remember the price per acre.



Nina and Norman Talbot.

In the fall of 1929, Chris Hennagar built three grainaries for us. He double walled and insulated two of them which we used as a dwelling. In December, 1929, we sold our registered shorthorn herd by auction at Dimsdale. They were the first registered cattle brought in the South Peace area. Ten heifers and a bull were shipped by train from LaCombe to Edson in September, 1911; then driven over the Edson Trail by

Norman and his collie dog. It took twenty-one days to travel over the Edson Trail. The herd grazed as they travelled. We hauled our farm machinery by teams and sleighs from Dimsdale to Kleskun, also household effects.

On January 1, 1930, we loaded twenty head of cattle, mostly milking strain shorthorn and a registered Shorthorn bull, into a boxcar in Dimsdale, unloaded them in Sexsmith, and drove them across Kleskun Lake to our new farm. Our family and I drove by car. Pearl was 14 years old, Oliver was 12 years old, Eileen 10 years and Norma 2½ years old. Donald was born March 4th at the Joe Hannah Haakstads nursing home with Dr. Gamey in attendance.

We worked very hard that spring and summer, cutting down huge Balms of Gilead trees. We hired two sturdy Swedes who took turns climbing up a long ladder to secure a long rope high up around the Balm trees. They cut all the surface roots, then both Swedes swung on the rope until the tree tipped enough to let them sever the tap or main root. Oliver skidded the huge tree away to the burning pile with Fannie, a tree pulling Clyde mare.



Discing the stubborn furroughs at Kleskun Lake.

Sandy Purvis, an old miner, cut down willow trees. He asked for "daminite", Sandy's pronouncement, to blow the willow roots out. For years the tall poplars along our drive were festooned with willow roots. Sandy drove six horses on a breaking plow. Clouds of mosquitoes filled the air day and night. Sandy felt sorry for his "six up", so he hung a smudge pail on the end of the breaking plow tongue. All went well until the smudge began to blaze. The "six up" went wild and so did Sandy. Dad, Mom, and all the children went to the rescue. Dad lifted the burning pail with a long pole.

Every horse received a kiss every morning from the sixty-two year old Scottsman as it's bridle went on. They returned the caresses by pressing their soft nose against Sandy's red face. Jack Peppin broke ten acres of sod for us with his Allis Chalmers tractor.

Fifteen persons sat down at our table every meal. The shacks were sweltering. Pearl baked stacks of cookies, dozens of cakes and pies. Eileen was our official baby sitter and Norma kept herself busy shinnying up onto every horse's back. Oliver worked along side the men building fences, digging wells, and "riding herd". Every ten days, I baked a hundred weight of flour into bread. We were a busy happy clan.

In the early days, wild fowl nested by hundreds on Kleskun Lake. The air was filled with whistling, trumpeting, honking, quacking and croaking. Norman was riding around the edge of the lake one spring afternoon, when he was attacked by three angry male swans. It was all he could do to ward off the huge birds and manage his frightened saddle horse.

Mother moose chose the heavy willow growth around the lake as a birth place for her calves. One big moose, christened Jennie by us, lived around our farm for years. At any time, she and her calves could be seen browsing as years went by. Her shiny black coat began to show grey. Deer, too, were plentiful. Mother deer brought her beautiful spotted fawn to the clover field to graze. In winter, the deer fed with our cattle.

Twice in 47 years, our farm has been overrun by snowshoe rabbits. We have had lynx years; we hesitate to kill a lynx even if he does raid our poultry yard, as he is a good rabbiter. Ground hogs are a nuisance to farmers. They did dens in grain fields. We have jet black, grey and reddish-brown hogs. Five young to a den are common. If you go near, mother hog whistles to the young to duck into the den. If her young insist on popping out, she sits over the hole, ducking in herself, only if one comes real close. We give porcupines a wide birth. In February we hear their mating calls. Our coyote population seems never to diminish. Our black bear population is on the increase. I have looked out my bedroom window to see a huge black bear looking in. Field mice and garter snakes we have by hundreds.



The famous "Sandridge Road".

Many ranchers took hay permits out on the lake bottom. After the spring rush had drained off, big hay stacks could be counted by the hundreds. On three dry falls, fires, of unknown origin, broke out among the hay stacks. With a strong west wind fanning the blaze, it became a roaring inferno. Acid smoke and ashes stifled farmer and his cattle alike. Rank smelling fine ashes sifted into homes, schools and every building in the Kleskun Lake area.

A. L. Bjerke and son, Ben, built a big modern home for us in the fall of 1930, sawing all the lumber by hand. They did the lathing and plastering, and the mixing and pouring of cement for a full size basement. The basement walls and the floor are three feet thick, as we built on a sand ridge. The sixty barrel cistern, made of cement, is still holding today. We paid the Bjerkes top wages, $3.50 for a ten hour day. Mr. Stokes from Grande Prairie did our plumbing. We moved into our new home December 20th. We helped to form a school district. Tranquility was the eighth name chosen. Malcolm McNeal built our school house.

Many changes have taken place at Kleskun Lake in the past forty-seven years. The lake has been drained, the heavy peat sod plowed, worked down and seeded to grasses and clover and made into a government community pasture. Cattle and sheep graze there now. A road has been graded across the east side with adequate ditching for drainage. Tranquility School was sold and moved away. A government bridge spans Kleskun Creek in place of the old plank one. The pupils of this area are bussed to Teepee Creek School.

Norman passed away March 6, 1952. I still live on the old farm.

An oil well was drilled on the north side of the lake. The western sun sets no more on the waters of Kleskun Lake. They have been drained down Kleskun Creek to the Big Smoky.

CARL AND ELIZABETH WAGEMAN

Elizabeth and Carl Wageman were both born in Austria, but met while living in Edmonton where they were married.

They had a family of nine children and came to the Tranquility District in 1929. Carl and his sons, Gustave and Wilfred came first to build the house and barn and clear some land. The boys, aged 14 and 16, worked very hard by hand brushing and breaking the soil. Their drinking water was taken from pot holes until they could dig a well. Drinking water was hauled from the Grant farm.

The following spring, Elizabeth and Linda came to join the family. Carl and the boys came in the boxcar with their furniture and farm equipment. They left a warm, dry climate, but upon arriving in Sexsmith they were not prepared for the nothern climate. Winter boots were packed away at the bottom of the freight. They finally arrived at the Bert Mackey farm, cold and hungry, and the horses were played out. They stayed the night and were lent a fresh team in the morning.

They lived in the little log house with a sod roof until Carl could get out logs and have them sawed into lumber and a comfortable house built.

Linda became ill with asthma due to the smog and smoke from the lake fires and had to be taken to Edmonton Hospital where she spent several weeks. Up to this time she attended Tranquility School. She married Al Mowbrey of Edmonton. They now live in Florida and have two daughters and a son.

Gustave married Helen Reiswig of Peoria and are now living in Kelowna, B.C. as is Wilfred who married Clara Martin.

Carl sold his farm to Wilfred, and he and Elizabeth moved to Winfield, B.C., where later Carl passed away.

WILFRED AND CLARA WAGEMAN FAMILY

Wilf came to Tranquility District with his father and brother in 1929 to clear the land and build shelters for their stock, and a house made of logs. The trees were cut down and roots grubbed by hand. That was quite a chore for two boys, aged 14 and 16. Wilf returned to his birthplace several times during his teens to work on a friends farm near Fort Saskatchewan. In winters he worked in the sawmill for Jack Fitzpatrick and Jack LaMarr's shingle mill.

His mode of travel was mostly Shanks ponies or horseback as not many young people could afford cars.

In 1937, Wilf cut rails for the first Teepee Creek Stampede race track. With the help of Jack Spence, Leo Nelson and Leon and Ed Martin, they dug holes for the posts by hand and received $3 a day, with every other day being donated to the Stampede Association. Wilf saved his money to buy an engagement ring for the girl he had met at the flowing well. It was at Ed Grant's place where everyone hauled their drinking water from.

Clara moved to Tranquility District with her parents in the fall of 1928. There was no high school close by, so she was only educated up through grade 9. Clara and Agnes, her sister, helped their parents on the farm. After the school was built, they were hired to do janitor work for $3 a month, which was a lot of money in those days. It would buy a pair of shoes.

The odd job was had by helping the neighbor ladies and later Clara worked at the Teepee Creek Store for a few years before she married Wilf. They were married in Edmonton in 1938. Wilf managed a farm at Clover Bar until his wife became ill and spent four months in the Royal Alex Hospital. While she was ill he returned to his friend's farm to work.

Their first son, Wayne, was born in 1939. When he was 6 weeks old, they returned to Tranquility where they purchased Phil Daigles farm. Wilf rented Clarence Cornbourough's farm for a few years, as their new farm had to be brushed and broken by hand.

Dwight was born in 1943 and Marlene was born in 1945.

Wayne attended the Tranquility School until Wilf moved his family to Milne Fraser's farm, and there Pamela was born in 1949. The three older children attended the Teepee Creek School taught by Bert Harrison.

Tranquility was calling again for Wilf and Clara, so they moved to Ed Grant's farm in 1952 and farmed until 1964. They moved once more, having purchased Bill Leonard's farm, plus Wilf's parents' farm giving them a total of 5 quarters of land.

The children were bussed to Teepee Creek and then Sexsmith for High School. They all attended Canadian Union College. Dwight and Marlene attended College at Oshawa Ontario and took their X-ray and Nurses Training at Branson Hospital.

Dwight married Joan Spangler in 1962. They have two daughters and a son, and are living in Toronto where he is an X-Ray Tech.

Wayne married Loreen Banman in 1962. They have two daughters and a son, and are living in Grande Prairie where he is working for the C.C.I.L.

Marlene married R. K. Mitchell in 1967. They have a daughter and son are living in Victoria where he is employed by B.C. Telephones. Marlene is a dental assistant.

Pamela married in 1968 to Larry Harriman of LaCombe. They have a daughter and are living in Kelowna, B.C. where Larry attends college.

Clara and Wilf sold their farm in 1974 and moved to Kelowna with eleven of their foster children, whom they have had in their home for 13 years. Two foster children stayed in Alberta to go to Canadian Union College.

LUCY WHITTEN (HARDMAN)

I taught in the Tranquility School in the years 1938-39 and 1939-40. 1938 was the first year the Grande Prairie School Division took over the schools west of the Smoky.

I was also the janitor of the school which gave me an extra $4 per month. I had to oil the floor 3 times a year and start the fire in the barrel stove. If I was at the school by 8 A.M. the school would be warm enough at 9 or later in the winter we started at 9:30 so then I would start the fire at 8:30.

Water had to be brought from Ed Grants well which the children hauled in 2 pails at the first recess. It had to be done in turns as everyone was anxious to get the water. The wood for the stove was in lengths to fit the barrel stove and was piled outside but we always had a good supply in the porch for every time the children 'left the room' they brought back an armful and if they forgot they got some nasty glares from the rest of the pupils.

We held a Christmas concert and to get money for this we held several whist parties during the year. I bought the candy, etc., and filled the bags which were always replenished by Mrs. Talbot who every year made a large amount of popcorn balls.

We also had a school picnic before the closing of school in June.

I think I can honestly say the district fitted it's name. People were so friendly and always willing to help.

Schools

TRANYUILITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 4495

In 1930 the need for a school district became apparent and urgent. To the south was the East Kleskun School District, to the north Teepee Creek, and to the west, miles of slough grass and lake bottom. It left a large area reaching from the lake east to the Smoky River.

A meeting was called in the spring, April 12, 1930, and it was decided that two schools were to be built. One should be on the east shores of the lake along the one main road, the "range line". The central location would have been in three feet of water. The next road allowance would have been in a bad line of sloughs and muskegs. After much searching on horseback and foot, it was decided to build the school on the corner of S.W. 30-73-3-6, on the south side of Kleskun Creej, formerly homesteaded by Dan Oulicf, later bought by the Kleskun Lake Cattle Company. In 1930 this land was then owned by Ed Grant.



Tranquility School, 1930.

A name had to be decided upon, many of which were suggested were Kleskun Ranch, Wellington and Linburg. Sonny Leland suggested Tranquility. It was a warm, peaceful day and the name fitted perfectly. The same afternoon a school board was formed. Phil Daigle was nominated secretary, George Robinson, chairman. John Arac and Malcolm McNeil were awarded the building contract, so construction was underway.

Miss Annie Graham from central Alberta was hired, and school opened on January 5, 1931. Among the first students to attend were: Pearl, Oliver and Eileen Talbot, Malcolm, Virginia and Albert Calliou, Emma, bviola, and Albert Martell, Jean Beamer, Jean and Lucille bnutt, Gladys and Mary bgraham, John Repetowski, Leo Nelson, Lydia Wageman and Mae Rice.

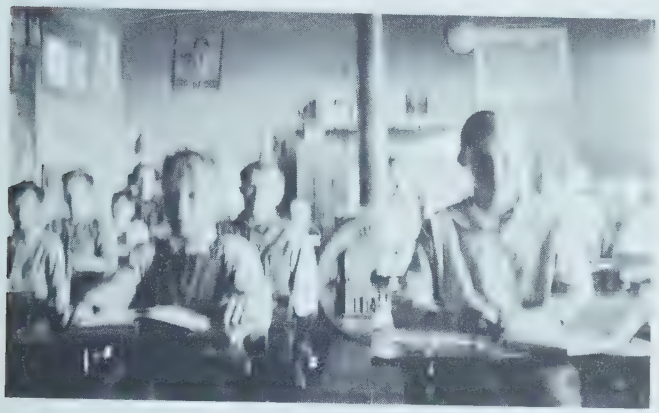


Gertrude Gorley on corduroy bridge, teacher at Tranquility School, 1932-33.

A requisition was only sent to the Board of Education once a year in March, so Miss Graham was not paid until almost the end of the term. She was paid the princely sum of $75 a month, and she had to pay her room and board out of that. An insert of George Robinson's manuscript reads "A year after the Tranquility School got started, the board consisting of Ed Grant,

Norman Talbot and myself saw that we would not be able to keep the school operating the full ten months required by the Act, money was really tight and too many were letting their taxes pile up and you can't operate a school on promises. It appeared to us that we would be able alright to finance operations for nine months but not for ten, so all three men on the board being experienced for many years in the vagaries of a northern winter climate, knew well that January was always the worst month of the year, and we would not open school until the first of February. Yes, you guessed it, January that year was the mildest month of the winter.

"One winter during the depression, I had a personal check that wrote on the bank in Sexsmith returned to me marked N.S.F. This shocked me for though my bank balance was always low, there was enough to cover any check I wrote, so I went into Sexsmith to see about it. It was the school account that was short, so in order to cash the teachers pay check, they had taken 20 bucks from my personal account to pay the teacher's check without setting up an overdraft. The clerk who looked it up thought it a great joke, but I called it very sloppy banking, playing ducks and with a customer's credit."



Interior of Tranquility School taken by Lucy Hardman.

Tranquility School was closed down for the school year 1933-34 due to lack of funds. The students went the long distance to Fitzsimmons over muskegs, sloughs and blazed trails through the bush. It reopened on Sept. 4, 1934, not to be closed again until centralization took place in 1955.

The early records on the Tranquility school are lost, but our beautiful brown cedar sided school was painted a thin coat of white paint in 1939. The paint was late coming from the municipality, so was held over from '38 and used the following summer. The siding had to be preserved and preserved it is. Pete and Mickie Breamer lived in it for years. It has now been moved to the south side of Kleskun Lake opposite the Community Pasture, and is being lived in by Danny and Carry Lang. Every teacher and pupil that went to Tranquility have one thing in common. They'd all recognize the smells of boiled linseed oil used lavishly on the hardwood floor and the odor of wet, steamy mitts hanging on the tin sheeting that skirted the big barrel heater, with a little chalk dust thrown in as an after whiff.

A tin pail sat on a table in the cloak room with a line of tin cups hung on nails above it. The bigger students had to fill it over at Grants at noon. If you could run fast enough and not spill it, you could get back in time for a ball game or a game of anti-I-over the barn. The school grounds were large (3 acres). The corded wood piles were behind the school, the creek banks (restricted area) to the north, the west and south bordered by roads, and a field to the east. The privies stood with their backs to the north wind and the barn was in the north east corner.

A field now stands very quietly, without even a recognizable bump to show where the noisy school once stood. Even the dredged creek banks look flatter and less forbidding. The fifteen foot ditch completely changed the scene from the good old time past to the stark present.

Persons serving on the board of trustees from April 12, 1930 to December 7, 1939 were Mr. Phil Daigle, Mr. Norman Talbot, Mrs. Bessie Nutt, Mr. V. H. Leland, Mrs. N. Talbot and Mr. E. J. Grant.

Our thanks go to the Glenbow-Alberta Institute of Calgary for the following points of interest.

On January 16, 1932, It was selected to erect a barn 16' x 24' of lumber. Donations were accepted.

V. H. Leyland donated 1000' of lumber

N. Talbot donated 500' of lumber

L. Martin donated a team and 100' of lumber

H. Beamer donated one day cutting poles and 3 days labor on barn.

P. Daigle donated to haul one load of lumber.

Mr. Talbot, Mr. Beamer, and Mr. Ed Martin made up the barn building committee. Mrs. E. J. Grant, Mrs. O. Martin, Mrs. T. Graham made up the entertainment committee. A dance was held in a large storage building at Ed Grants.

December 22, 1930 — Tenders received for delivering, splitting and piling of 10 nords of wood, 5 cords green, 5 cords dry. 128 cu. ft. 6 cord.

Lloyd Lewis $1.25 per cord; W. L. Balwin $3.00 per cord.

H. Calliou $3.00 per cord; K. C. Grant $3.50 per cord.

M. McNeil $3.75 per cord.

Lowest tender accepted.

Tenders received on November 16, 1931.

Walter Baldwin $2.50 per cord; H. Calliou $2.75 per cord.

Gus Wageman $3.00 per cord; Remi Martel $2.00.

Ed Martin $3.00.

By Jan. 23, 1939, the prices were up. Ed Martin received $2.50 per cord, but in December 1939, Wilf Wageman received $2.25 a cord.

W. May received $1.50 for banking school. "September 1, 1932 — We accepted Frank Donald's offer of a free show for the children at the Capitol Theatre and that we furnish the gasoline for cars to take them in."

A THREE YEAR PROJECT — RANCHING ON THE KLESKUN — by Jean Rycroft

This project started over three years ago with a suggestion by Mrs. Nina Talbot that I attempt to get as

much information as I could on the Kleskun Ranch while there were still some of the people who worked there still around.

With the aid of many people, who gave generously of their time and information, many by mail from



great distances, I was able to piece together the following story.

With apologies in advance for any mistakes or anyone left out; here is a part of our history as recalled by several sources of information.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the following people without whose help this story could not have been written.

Miss Isabel Campbell, Mrs. Dorthy Bekkerus, Mr. Art Fenton, Mr. George Fraser, Mrs. Florence Grant, Mr. Ted Hagen, Mr. George (Rusty) Hollingworth, Mr. Jim Johnson, Mr. Herman Klukas, Mr. Martin Lee, Mr. Victor (Sonny) Leyland, Mrs. Sarah Reynolds, Mr. Roy Robert, Mr. George Robinson, Mr. Adolph Sorken, Mrs. Nina Taloot, Mr. Charlie White, Mrs. Norma White, Glenbow Foundation in Calgary, Provincial Archives in Edmonton.

On a certain day more than seven decades ago, a white man clad in the garb of a pioneer roamed back and forth around the shores of a wild-looking, mud-bottomed lake in the heart of a gigantic hinterland.

James Kennedy Cornwall — for the pioneer was none other than the famous Canadian explorer-adventurer — in his fur trading activities with the Indians had frequently heard the Red man tell of this wonderful grazing ground where the moose and deer grew fattest, in the shortest time of anywhere in the country.

The lake was shallow and marshy, a muskrat paradise. Its waters covered the major portion of a valley of magnificent sweep — named by the Beaver Indians the Kleskun, or "fat cache" — a source of plentiful grazing wild game and wild fowl were very numerous; geese especially liked the wild rice grass that grew in abundance.

The story went that when the Indians had excess fat from bear, elk, etc. (mostly bear) it was rolled into balls and buried or "cached" on the shady side of the Kleskun Hills and saved for making pemmican.

A buffalo run was then constructed in the Kleskun Hills.

A pen was built at the foot of a high cutbank near the fat cache and leading funnelwise to the top of the bank above the pen two fences were built far from out on the plains.

Then patiently waiting, always watching, the Indian lookouts would take their stations on the hills.

Weeks might pass before the first grey glimmer of an autumn dawn would reveal the buffalo grazing near the death chute.

Silently, a smoke wraith lifts above the lookout hill. Indians far out on the plains, watch the mounting signal. The buffalo are there, but unless the wind is just right, there will be no hunt for buffalo will not run down nor across wind.

The day carries on and suddenly the smoky pillar seems to leap from the signal hill as a water soaked hide is spread over the flame — then a ball of smoke, large as a council teepee and repeated three times, as the hide is spread and respread and withdrawn, lifts from the ground.

Far out on the prairie the smoke waves waft the message; then swift and silent as winging vultures the Indian bands come racing to the chase.

At the first alarm the buffalo herd goes tearing upwind, into the out-stretched funnel over the cliff.

There they are killed at leisure and the meat cut up in strips to dry in the sun. When it is thoroughly dried, it is pounded into a fine meal with either a club or a stone, dried berries are added and the fat cache on the hillside is opened, and bear grease mixed with buffalo tallow is kneaded into the meat until the mass becomes a dough.

This product, finally sewn into a sack of buffalo hide was known far and wide as pemmican, God's manna to the tribes of the northern plains.

Another version of the meaning of Kleskun was told by Herman Klukas and many others who were told by the Cree Indians it meant simply "white mud" which anyone who has been near it can verify. The soil around the soap-holes and sloughs is just white (clay and gumbo).

The legend goes, according to Roman Catholic priests that Frank or "Lacombe" Johnston stayed with when he came into the country in 1909, that the Cree Indians chased the Beaver Indians out of this area around the lake 200 years ago. The battle ground was Bear Lake which was very dry that year, and the Indian women and children hid in the tall grass that grew around the edges of the lake. The battle was furious, but finally the Cree got the upper hand and drove the Beaver Indian back to Beaverlodge and beyond where they had to stay, in their own territory.

Such was the life the Indian knew around the shores of Kleskun Lake and then the white man came. The Indian turned his face towards the sunset, and as he slipped away his canoe keel left no trail; like the Buffalo, he vanished overnight.

But the land where the Red man hunted through ages past took on a new life.

Forceful, resourceful men from every walk of life came hewing the way into the north to tame the plains and sew the seeds of an inland empire.

Such a man was Colonel Jim Cornwall, who with patient thoroughness became familiar with the fact that the lake stood at the headwaters of the Kleskun Creek which in turn empties into the Smoky River, a good 80 miles as the crow flies from the Smoky's joining with the Peace further north. What he was studying was the draining of the lake by the possible means of gravity.

When Jim Cornwall, the "apostle of the north" returned to the outside to tell the world of his findings, he was met not only with ridicule, but with out and out scorn and oppostition from some quarters.

What Colonel Cornwall did succeed in doing was to start a flow of settlers into the Grande Prairie and Peace River area — but, here he passes out of the Kleskun Lake narrative.

Early in 1905, Mr. Campbell Benson reached the area and selected unsurveyed land on Kleskun Lake. He returned to Pincher Creek to purchase an outfit of pack horses which he brought back in here in August. He was accompanied by his wife, the former Margaret Ann Wishart, who was a practical nurse, but when the weather turned cooler, it was decided that Mrs. Benson should return to Strathcona for the winter while Campbell travelled on to the homestead to build a cabin and barn.

The next March, Campbell brought his wife back to share his home on the Kleskun. About 1910, the Bensons opened up a stopping place in Grande Prairie and ran this in conjunction with their homestead venture.

Quick to see opportunity in the vanguard of landseekers beginning to come into the country, in 1912 the Benson's journeyed out to Dauphin, Man., where he purchased 150 head of cattle, which he shipped back to Edson, and then they drove them in over the Edson Trail.

He was backed in this venture by his wife's relatives, with the idea that he establish a cattle ranch and supply livestock to the incoming settlers.

They were easily persuaded by his glowing reports which were so enthusiastic concerning the seemingly limitless opportunities the country offered.

Late in the fall of 1912 Alex and Dan Wishart came in from Edson with the Benson supply outfit, and came with it to the Kleskun Lake Ranch to check on their new venture.

There they realized that the Benson venture was hopeless. However, the vastness and challenge of the country intrigued Alex and he sent back for his wife and family to join him in Grande Prairie. Grande Prairie gained one of its most prominent citizens of the time, who ran a stage line between Grande Prairie and Edson.

About 1916 Campbell Benson bought land at Bear Lake where he developed Benson's Point, a popular site for swimmers and picnickers for years, with an open air dance pavilion, with a band stand and concession booth, a children's playground, waterslides, diving floats and a wharf.

Here Campbell Benson, a colorful personality in his time, leaves the Kleskun Lake story and a second major ranching company takes over.

A few years later there came to the shores of this lake a Norse-Canadian, Edmund Thompson, land guide and soil-taster. (Actually tests soil by the sense of taste and the feel of the clay or loam against his tongue) who operated a 5000 acre farm of his own near Kingman, Alta.

A man well-versed in the reclamation of land, he considered thousands of tons of hay might easily be harvested. Hay meant beef, and beef meant gold to Thompson.

Harman Klukas explained, "Ed Thompson was an immigration man and had brought Scandinavians in from the United States on a draining proposition to settle CPR land at Hay Lakes, 30 to 40 miles out of Edmonton, which he bought for $3 an acre. He got a plow and lots of Norwegians and they drained it. It was a success, rich black soil, so they tried the same thing on Kleskun Lake."

The ranch here originated under the Union Government formed by the Liberals and the Conservatives," he added.

His tests of soil taken from the lake bottom and from the land on the shore proved it to be the richest sort of black loam with a clay sub-soil.

The top layer of earth was identical in appearance with that used for potting hothouse vegetables.

Edmund was accompanied by his two sons, Alfred and Theodore, who were to share with him in his venture, but tragedy struck the family and both sons died in the epidemic of influenza that struck in 1918.

Another son, John and a daughter Mabel also lost their lives in this outbreak.

He had come north to test the soil in the Kleskun country on behalf of a company of Canadians which included, besides himself, Mike Sheady, retired railway contractor; James Pike, businessman; Frank Pike, young western bank manager; and the Hon. V. W. Smith, Minister of Railways in the Alberta Legislature.

After a couple of weeks spent at the lake and scouting the land around the lake, he returned south and declared that he was willing to invest every spare cent of his own money to help develop the property and, when the engineers engaged to investigate made a report that the lake could indeed be drained into the Smoky River, Frank Pike organized the company that was known as Kleskun Ranch Co.

Edmund Thompson was elected president, and gave them his advice: "I tell you boys, this layout is just going to devour money — swallow it up as a range bull does buffalo grass. It's going to take a lot of money, a scandalous lot — to do this job right.

"Why the fence alone will be longer than the trail of the Israelites awandering in the wilderness, and when it comes to ditchin' none but the Lord, and Mike Sheady here, knows how much dirt we're going to have to move. Then again when she's drained and a growin' hay, we're going to have to buy a dogie, raise a calf and grow him into a steer before we get a single cent return on our investment.

"Then there's buyin' lumber and buildin' and God only knows what not. And mind you we can't do no staggerin' stant bob on this job — when we turn her loose we got to ride her to the finish. And when we get that lake bottom a growin' hay, if we run short of money to buy bulls to eat it — why, we'll just naturally

bury the outfit right there, and our monument will be a mountain of buffalo grass."

With Ed as president, to the directorate were added the following: Boston, Mass. capitalists who took a 50 percent interest in the ranch after their own engineers and land experts had made an investigation; John Bowditch, banker; Cochrane Harper and Co., a firm of Boston, Mass. bankers; Charles W. Perkins, president of the Burlington Railroad System, Chicago; and Charles Adams, the latter being the well known skipper of the "Resolute". The company was organized with an authorized capital of $600,000.

A land grant was obtained from the Province of Alberta in lieu of having the lake drained under the Reclamation Act.

Organization was completed in 1918 and development of the property was commenced without a day's delay.

The object in view was to establish a 45,000 acre cattle ranch capable of producing highest quality beef cattle for shipments to British markets.

The lake was emptied by a drainage system costing $100,000 thus reclaiming 18,400 acres of land of almost inexhaustible fertility.



Louis Furhman on the horse he brought from Wyoming.

To this was added 1600 acres adjacent, which the company purchased to complete the 20,000 acres they had in mind for the southern and eastern part of the ranch.

Then they leased 25,000 acres northeast of the Kleskun property, making the ranch 45,000 acres all told one of the largest propositions of its kind under the British flag at that time.

The Kleskun Ranch was divided into five camps, the home camp being located on the Kleskun Creek.

The land for the eastern and main camp or home camp of the ranch was purchased from Dan Gulick (south ½ section of Section 30, Township 73, Range 3, West of the sixth Meridian) and next quarter to that



Kleskun Lake Cattle Company headquarters.

from Louis Fehrman (N.W. ¼ of Section 19, Twp. 73, W6), two of the bona fide homesteaders around the outside of the lake. The ranch house at the main camp was built in 1919. The west camp, once Benson's camp was where George Fraser now lives, several large barns and a cookhouse were built there, and some of the corrals are still standing. The huge barn burned later on.

The north camp was below the hill where Alf Bisgrove used to live. Water was provided for the stock by running a pipe in the ground from the soaphole quarter (now Bob Morgan's).

Adolph Sorken remembers in 1918 when a ditch, eight feet deep, was dug by hand right to the lake bank and they had a camp there to feed and water the cattle. The ditch went right from Butler Milkes' land to the lake bottom. Pipe was laid in the ditch, deep enough so it wouldn't freeze in winter.

The south camp was section three, over by Murchies.

There were five wells drilled at the home camp, all approximately 300 feet and yet four produced very hard water and the other one soft water. All five were artisian and the one near the house had a flow that was measured at three gallons per minute and the others about the same.

Settlers around the lake were much opposed to the drainage of the lake as many of them planned to finance their homesteads with the income from muskrat pelts from the lake. In fact many of them settled there for this purpose alone.

One such pioneer was George Robinson, who stated, "When I filed on land half a mile from the shore of the lake, the main attraction, besides the fertility of the soil, was proximity of the lake. I built my home and enlisted and was away for three years . . . when I returned I found things very different . . . a

large dredge was working day and night to finish drainage ditches. The panicky government had turned 22,000 acres over to the company to drain, ostensibly for the purpose of producing food for a country at war. Settlers' interests were entirely disregarded and our lake which was used to furnish hay, cut along its edges for winter feed and muskrats in the winter for summer grubstakes, was drained down Kleskun Creek. These rats were of an exceptional strain, being larger and more heavily furred than the usual rat."

Many farmers relied on that hay to feed their livestock, and when it was no longer available hard feelings erupted.

"Dad hayed down there in 1917 and suddenly in 1918 you couldn't get permits, but nobody knew why. We found out later it was because of the ranch but the government officials wouldn't say at the time," remembers Adolph Sorken, who was a young boy at the time.

George continued, "I remember Bert Mackey and I cut together about one mile west from the range line and the hay was so high that we had to have a man on horseback go ahead of the mower on the first round so he could guide the mower driver and so make a reasonably shaped strike out. I hestitated to put this in as a stranger reading it might think it so farfetched that he could not believe it, but it is true.



Hay Stacker, haying on Kleskun Lake, July, 1928.

"Bert was a fairly big man, I would say just under six feet, maybe 5 feet, 10 inches and if he walked into that hay for 10 feet you could not see the top of his head.

"We put up a lot of hay in a short while and stacked it by rolling it up with a long rope and a team of horses, which is a good way of stacking and quite fast too. Neither one of us knew what the six foot grass was but I made it my business to inquire later and found it to be a Reed Canary grass and the seed at the time was $1 per pound."

Herman Klukas, a veteran who later worked on the ranch stated, "Although the farmers had been putting up hay there for years, even the Klondikers put up hay there on their way through, they were suddenly stopped. So much wasn't homesteaded at the time, so the ranch got all of it." (The Klondiker's horses stayed and joined the wild bunch and many wild horses made the Kleskun Lake their home when Jim Johnson came in with his parents, the Soren Johnsons in 1911.)

"The company came in, cut the hay, baled it and shipped it down to southern Alberta. The local farmers raised such a row they decided to go into ranching instead."

Another area of conflict was the sale of Clyde Smith's Egg Lake Ranch. Smith was forced to sell because he had no feed and his cattle had a bad time wintering during the long winter of 1919-1920. The Smith cattle had been running on free range along the Bad Heart and Smoky, and the Kleskun outfit had taken over their summer range.

Kent Purdy reported, "We had few casualties with the cattle that year as the ranch had 4000 tons of hay in stacks to feed the original 1000 head of cattle."

Charlie White, who ran his cattle with the ranches each summer stated, "The Kleskun Ranch crowded him out of his lease on the Bad Heart and they's why the people were so sore at them. They had a lot of good farming land, but Thompson got a hold of it and got a long lease on it and tied it up, but they ended up getting it all back in the end when the ranch closed down."

In return for draining the lake bottom with a seven mile drag line and ditch to the Smoky, the ranch had a tax free concession from the federal government.

In early 1918 dredging machines were brought into the lake and placed on the ice and draining was started.

The main ditch, running east and west, was 20 feet wide, six and one-half miles long and supposed to be 10 feet deep. All other ditches were five miles long.

After the water level went down lateral ditches were dug to drain into the main ditches. Mr. Treadway's steam dredger worked at draining 30,000 acres of the lake bottom by funneling the water down the Kleskun Creek at a cost of $150,000, according to Kent Purdy, bookkeeper.

Martin Lee, who came into the country with Thompson, and whom Thompson treated like a son after his own died, explained, "They had a big V-plow, ¼ mile of cable and horses with a winch. They had three big sets of planks and had the track running on them. They would move one set forward at a time until all three were moved up again. It took about one dozen men to keep the planks ahead of the machine with a winch. The big machine had a dipper on it and all the dirt was thrown on the north side of the ditch because Thompson was going to build a road through there. The outfit was owned by Treadway."

Young Hermon, who homesteaded northwest of the lake, added, "Treadway was well liked in the community, and caught two years for the Sexsmith ball team."

Herman Klukas added further information. "When the plow caught up with the capstan they unhooked the plow and rolled out the ¼ mile cable, then hooked up to the plow again, and so it continued."

"But, the lake never did drain so that it didn't fill up with water every spring. I wasn't surprised as there were 10-20 little creeks running into the lake and only one to drain it out," laughed George Robinson.

In 1921 Edvall and Olafson, with a V-plow drained

all the small lakes left on the lake bottom, but every spring they would fill up again from the run-off of snow.

The fertility of the soil in the former lakebed and its immediate surroundings exceeded the expectations of the men who had invested their money. While it was not their intentions to cultivate any grains or grasses, except for stock feed; several hundred acres of oats they sowed the first year after the land was broken yielded 120 bushels to the acre, three times an average yield. The land is so capable of yielding 10,000 tons of Red Top and Blue Joint hay each fall, stated the Macleans Magazine of August, 1930.

Martin Lee, who worked the land explained, "The land was so soft; just bird droppings. I never had to work it at all. I sowed all the sloughs to Timothy by hand, with a wheelbarrow. I packed the seed in on my back."

"It was the same with the bigger areas, they never had to be worked first. We seeded 500 acres of oats one year with four-ups of horses on 10 foot drills."

According to the record of the first herd of cattle, mostly Herefords came from Kingman, Alta. and numbered 1000. These were sent in by rail to Sexsmith. But many settlers claim that they bought at least 100 head around the district, some black Angus from Colton on Walter Spry's, and several Shorthorn crosses.

As one oldtimer put it, "They paid $100 a head for any kind of a cow in the fall of '19, anything that would breed in the spring." This statement was confirmed by George Robinson.

Quite a few of the cattle sent in from Kingman were Thompson's own. A Mr. Stewart, an experienced cattleman from the western states, was sent in by the Boston interests as the first manager, but due to inexperience in operating a cattle ranch in such a northern latitude as the Peace River, he was replaced by a Camrose cattleman by the name of Lindstrom about Christmas 1919, who in turn was replaced by Ted Gardener during the summer of 1920. In between permanent managers, both Pete Bendickson and Abe Edburg served periods of manager-foreman.

From the first of January to March of 1920 the train from Edmonton could not get through as far as Spirit River, in spite of snow plows and two engines on the express and passenger train. One engine would run out of coal or water and have to turn back to refuel. Mr. Prudy's colonist car finally arrived in Spirit River, but after a four-day wait the passengers for the Grande Prairie district had to complete their trip through blizzard weather by sleigh. Eight or ten of the younger ones went in an open sleigh. About 30 older folk were crowded into a covered rig which tipped over and burned near the home of Otto, a trapper, in the Burnt Hills. No one was hurt. The trail was poor and, to meet another rig, one would have to pull off into an occasional siding, as the snow was seven feet deep in places.

Whoever had the smallest rig had to unload and tip the sleigh over and let the larger one past and then tip back up again and load up. Bill Shannon was doing most of the freighting between Grande Prairie and Spirit River then. All the freighting was done by horses



"Sonny" Leland ranch hand.

that winter from Spirit River where the train stopped on.

From August 1919 to February 1920 Mr. Kent Purdy was bookkeeper for the ranch. The company leased rangeland on both the Bad Heart and Smoky Rivers and from the figures Mr. Purdy was able to obtain, that lease, including fencing (four wire and tamarack posts) and buying out a number of homesteaders on the fringe of the lake came to approximately $150,000.

Sonny Leyland, later a cowhand at the ranch, informed me by letter, "This lease was all fenced and divided into two parts, known as the north and south leases, and the Smoky River was used for a fence on the east side of the lease, Kleskun Creek on the south and the Bad Heart River on the north."

"Fencing contracts were let out to homesteaders," remembered Adolph Sorken. "My dad (Andrew Sorken), Ed Blanes, and Nels Arneson did contract work building fences. They cut the line and put a fence up from Tom Fogle's to Jim Stewart's, four miles and then east for a mile. There were a lot of contracts out at the time."

Mrs. Sorken used to knit for the ranch hands and do mending, etc. for them.

Martin Lee thought that a lot of the fencing in the west was done by a fellow by the name of Anderson, but he couldn't remember the first name. Ted Hagen said that Vic Anderson (Fred's cousin), did some fencing on the west.

Another one of the fencers, Charlie White, was a wealth of information. "They paid good wages. The next year Bill Gooderich, Jake Duchowski and myself got $75 a mile. We started out at Murchie's, on the southeast corner of the lake and fenced west, right up around past Fred Paschetag's until we got to the second township line, and then we went north to George Frazer's and back on an angle to Andy Murchie's again and fenced in a pasture. We cut the posts as we went. They had to stand six feet, four inches at the top and we put on three wires and the posts were 12 feet apart — we had to haul the posts for the west end as there was no bush there. We just used one team and left the others in the first pasture."

He continued, "The Sorken's outfit got $100 a mile, but they had gumbo and heavier stuff to cut through than us."

Another way the farmers could make money was by haying for the ranch. Adolph stated, "The ranch brought in a lot of men to hay. There were three crews, one bunch from around LaGlace and Valhalla. Mr. Ole Alstad had one contract, and Mr. Kirt who came up from the south with the first haying crew, worked on that crew as well as several Alstad boys. All of the homesteaders were down there with racks hauling hay to town for the ranch and they shipped it all south for feed — nobody here had any feed. That summer there was a bad frost and they lost all their wheat crop and cut that for feed. That's all they had."

These contractors were paid by the ton.

Sonny Leyland claimed, "Most of the haying was contracted out but the ranch also had four haying outfits of its own which made 40 extras at haying time so extra help had to be hired in the cookhouse too. One such helper in the summer of 1920 was Johanna Haakstad, later famed maternity home matron in Sexsmith, who spent that summer cooking at the ranch.

There were usually about 35 men on permanent staff, some being key men who received more wages."

All the cattle were taken to the lease in the spring and summer and then taken back to the main ranch for winter feeding, where they were divided up amongst the camps. In winter at least two men were employed in each of the five camps, to haul hay to the sheds where the beef were sheltered. These sheds were built of poles covered with straw and were quite sufficient for cold weather. Each camp had near it a never ending spring of fresh water. (Martin thought Ole, Pete Nepstad's son, drilled wells where they were needed.)

Martin Lee set up the far west camp (which had been purchased by the ranch from Martin Olson and which Martin Lee later bought for himself) and with a crew of four men fed 500 head of cattle during the winters.

Martin remembered that single men got $90 per month plus room and board.

"When my crew and I were digging our well by hand, Thompson came along in the evening and said, 'Well boys, there's no use digging any further, you'll never get water here.' The next morning she broke in and we had only dug down 12 feet — that well watered 500 head of cattle out of one tank and we never had to warm it, even in the coldest weather. That spring of mine never freezes over, and is still flowing as heavy as ever," mused Martin.

"They put up hay one year at Grouard, where there is a great big flat, miles of it. These fellows had put up hay, stacks of it, and they took the cattle down there and wintered them," stated Rusty.

After the war, in 1919, Herman Klukas went to work for the Kleskun Ranch Co.

Word came in the spring of the year that Knobby Clarke was bringing the herd belonging to the ranch back from winter range at High Prairie, then called Prairie River.

They got as far as Snipe Lake and then lost them. Manager Thompson was up in the air and thought someone had stolen them. They asked Herman what he thought. Herman said the cattle would come home to the ranch and he was right. A month or so later the cattle were all back home on the range; they had come straight through the bush.

"A man named Lindstrom was foreman at the time," recalled Herman. "He wore his spurs upside down, which was supposed to be taken as the sign of a dangerous man, but the only thing dangerous about him was his talk. He didn't last long and soon Pete Bendickson took over as foreman. Hamburger Jones was cook at the time."

Herman boarded with the notorious Knobby Clarke who also worked for the ranch at this time. Knobby had come in to the country when the Union government formed, he was for the Liberals and Captain Blake for the Conservatives.

"Knobby could tell so many stories and tell them so nice. He had been in the Canadian Lighthorse during the war, with the military police. First they served on horseback, later they gave them motorcycles. Knobby was a damn good man. It would take a damn good man to do what he did. Put him to the right job, he couldn't be beat.

"Oh, once in a while he staged his little plays. You know, when the RCMP ride they put on their long gauntlets; when the cavalry parade they put on their gauntlets; when Knobby decided to perform he put on his long black gauntlets.

"Once Knobby pulled on his long black gauntlets and decided to threaten me. He just got the length of the horse behind me, on the left side. Then he looked at me with a crook on his kisser and I was supposed to run. But I called his bluff and I never ran from him, and there was never any gunplay.

"Ed Gillam, one of the top ranch hands, didn't bluff either. He came in as a foreman for the Kleskun Ranch Co. When Gillam was bringing some cattle through for the ranch, Knobby decided to go out with his Smith & Wesson and keep them from coming across his land. Ed, who was riding drag at the time, heard all the shooting and came up to see what the noise was all about. By this time his lead cowboys and the herd were turning back. Ed informed Knobby, 'Knobby, I set out to take these cattle to the lease and that's where I'm taking them'. The cattle went across."

When asked later if he really thought Knobby would shoot, Ed replied, "Wa'll I don't reckon but I didn't like the way he was chawin' on the trigger."

A little French man who had been present on the drive at the time took to the bush and didn't come out until morning.

All that time Ed Thompson had stomach trouble and in the absence of a doctor, Coal-oil Johnny was called. Coal-oil Johnny, (Ole Nepstad) was well known for his horse doctoring, "if a cow was sick he fixed it." He rubbed old Ed with coal-oil and darn near burnt the stomach off him."

Knobby and Lindstrom were the greatest of friends and their exploits to Spirit River for refreshments and gambling often ended up in front of the Magistrate R. H. Rycroft there.

As Martin explained it, "They drew wages but they didn't work much. Once between Lindstrom and Knob-

by they sold a whole carload of flour that was shipped in for the ranch. That's when Lindstrom went down the road."

Charlie White had another story to add. "Knobby and this fellow Barber, they were two together that played a joke on Thompson. They were more for tricks than anything else, and they loved to do a trick on Thompson if they could.

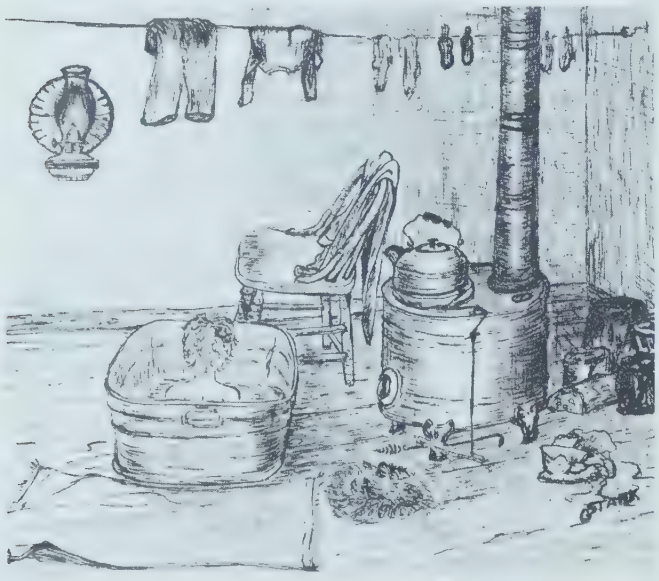
"The fellows from the ranch used to come through my place on their way to the lease. I built a corral and they used to put the cattle there and stay over spring and fall. Anytime any of them went through they stopped in.

"Anyway Barber came to my place and stayed for supper one night, and by gosh, he had a steer's head on his wagon. I said. 'What the devil are you doing with the likes of that?' It was a holstein at that!

"He said he wanted it for his dog so I never thought no more about it, but later on this to came out about Knobby Clarke shooting the cattle and so on. But, what he had gone and done, he had put that darn head out there, and that was where they got the story about Knobby shooting the ranch cattle. That caused quite a bit of trouble, that did. They finally got after Knobby to try to get sometning on him, but they couldn't," laughed Charlie heartily.

"They did finally get the police out to arrest him when I was working at Barber's. I was going down there anyway so I told the police I would show him the way if he insisted, but I knew Knobby wasn't home. He rode along with me anyway and informed me he was going to get Knobby no matter how long it took. I was laughing to myself and thinking, 'It'll take a long time too.' Anyway Knobby didn't show up and the policeman went over and boarded at Brooks, which is where I boarded too.

"Every day he would go down there and check but Knobby was never there. Finally he got so he'd just wait until I came in at night and every night he'd ask 'Did you see anything of Knobby?' and I'd say 'No'. Finally he began to get tired of asking and one night he didn't ask so I didn't say anything. Next morning when he asked me if I'd seen anything of Knobby, I said, 'No, I didn't see him, but there was a different horse on the picket rope, and I think he was home.' Was he ever mad, but he hadn't asked me.



"Anyway Knobby knew he was looking for him so he hustled up and got into Grande Prairie and got all his case raked up with a lawyer before they even got him arrested. They had to go back without Knobby.

"Another time he sneaked around and turned the policeman's horse loose when he hitched up at the rail to arrest him. The horse only got as far as the gate, back three or four miles, but he had to walk after him. He was always up to some trick or another," chuckled Charlie.

George Robinson chuckled about Knobby claiming he was going to shoot a "White-faced moose" at the watering hole.

Ted Hagen, now of Peace River, worked at the ranch at the west camp cutting 500 acres of green feed. Lyman and Ray Winders had two Massey-Harris binders cutting, the ranch had a Deering binder and Ted stooked behind. They also hayed at the home camp. Ole Ovelsen was cutting hay with a mower.

Ted Hagen continued, "Fritz Offsay, an old German fellow who was quite a guy, worked there at the time. Jim Boon was foreman at the home camp and Jesse Thomas at the west camp.

"Jack Ronch, from over Clairmont way, came and borrowed the V-ditcher with the intentions of draining Clairmont Lake," recalled Ted.

"My brother Perl (later Les) Hagen worked on the ranch about this time and one day he went out with his horse early in the morning and there were a lot of wild tiger lilies so he decorated his horse and saddle all up with them and rode back to camp. A fellow standing there said it looked like he was going to a funeral, just in fun. By gosh, next thing they found an old guy hanging in the granary."

Martin Lee recalled one ranch hand known merely as B. S. Smith, who homesteaded on Wes Salacki's. I didn't know his real name, but he was in my camp, and he was getting older and wanted to die. He asked me what would be easier; to hang, shoot, or drown himself. I told him he would have to make up his own mind, and didn't think he would do anything."

"One time he stole a razor from one of the other men, named Hagen. That man woke up one night to find B.S. standing by his bed. I don't know if he was going to cut Hagen's throat or his own but Hagen sure got a scare. Anyway he ended up hanging himself in a shack down on the lake." When the police arrived on the scene, Smith's pipe was in his mouth, whether placed there or not was the question.

Rusty (George) Hollingworth, who worked for the ranch about this time and insisted he was hired "because there were very short of saddle horses and I had a good one." He worked both riding the range and helping to hay.

Rusty added to Martin's story: "There was another fellow Tincup Jones who farmed the quarter next to Mackey's working there at the time and he started to wear Smith's boots. He was kind of a superstitious jigger, and Knobby saw a chance for one of his jokes.

"One night when Jones had gone to bed Knobby tied a string on Smith's boots and came back later that

night playing ghost, saying, 'I want my boots, I want my boots.' Jones, beside himself with fear, jumped up and threw the boots in the stove, much to the delight of Knobby."

Cooks that Martin remembered working at the ranch were John Henry (Hamburger) Jones. (I don't know if he was the Jones in the above tale) and another was simply known as Old Bob.

Mrs. Jesse Thomas cooked for us at the west camp. Her husband Jesse built the chutes for the first stampede at Teepee Creek. He was the foreman at that camp.

"Ben Love cooked for us at the home camp. One day he came out to tell us it was time for dinner, and he dropped dead on the way back to camp. I think he was an uncle to Harold Love who also worked there at one time.

"Harold Love was just a young boy as I remember him working cleaning the barn. I went in one day and he said to me, 'I'm so lonesome I just can't work.' He was just a young boy so I stayed and helped him for a while and talked to him. He just wanted to talk to somebody. Harold broke land with oxen and a walking plow when he was just 13, so he took on a man's job early. Ed Gillam looked out for him pretty good."

A major purchase was made by the ranch in the fall of 1921 according to the October 11, 1921 issue of the Grande Prairie Herald.

> Grande Prairie Herald. October 11, 1921: "Cabinet Member Sold Fine Herd of Herefords to Kleskun Ranch:
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> "What is reported to be the largest sale yet of purebred livestock in northern Alberta was completed on Thursday evening, when the Honorable V. W. Smith, Minister of railways and Telephones, disposed of his fine herd at Camrose to the Kleskun Ranch Co. at Sexsmith, for around $25,000. Negotiations which have been underway for some days, were ended and arrangements were made for the transfer. There are 150 head of cattle bought by the ranch company; all being of the Fairfax Hereford breed which was given so many prize winners to western show rings. A purebred Percheron stallion was also bought in the big deal.
>
> "Owing to the fact that he could not give the herd the required attention through coming to Edmonton to assume a cabinet position, Mr. Smith decided to dispose of the animals. He was earlier approached by the northern company and a deal finally reached. The cattle will at once be shipped north. It was stated by the purchasers this morning that a special train would be required, and arrangements to that end are now being made.
>
> "This stock will be added to the ranch companies herd at Sexsmith, augmenting the 1600 high grade Herefords now there. The last big buy for this ranch campany was last spring when six prize Hereford bulls were purchased from J. C. Sherry and shipped north. Those who negotiated the present sale on behalf of the company were president, Edmond Thompson, along with Michael Sheedy, James and Frank Pike.
>
> "Three years ago we located in the north and have since proved the suitability of the country for stock raising," said one of the company's officials this morning. "In spite of the depression in the stock markets, we believe that this is the time to intensify the breeding of good purebreds. The day of the scrub has passed and all should be urged to increase their purebred breeds."
>
> "With large holdings in the Grande Prairie district the company is planning to develop on a large scale. There is sufficient land in its possession to stock 500 head on the future."

This was followed in the spring of the following year with this announcement:

> May 9, 1922, Grande Prairie Herald:
> "It is reported that Mr. Edmund Thompson, formerly manager of the Kleskun Ranch has resigned his position with the company and it is not finally decided as to who will be his successor."

"He came in here a millionaire and went out broke." sympathized Martin. "I know he ended up paying for all the draining himself."

Charlie White had this to say. "Thompson himself was a real good guy, you could make a deal with him now — he let out contracts for fencing — his word was good right through to the cheque; every deal you had with him was the same. I liked him."

"When the Kleskun Ranch came in it put quite a lot of money in the country. I sold them some of my first oat crop. I didn't have to haul it to Sexsmith and I even got two cents a bushel more — that counted for something, I'll tell you now."

The foreman at the time was Ted Gardener, a huge red headed man who was born in Russell, Man. in 1884, following the Riel Rebellion, which his father took part in. He came west with his parents to Pirmez Creek, 20 miles west of Calgary when he was 1½ years old, and gained experience by growing up in a ranching country. His brother Clem was at one time a champion bronc rider.

Prior to coming to the Kleskun Ranch he managed the Imperial Ranch, one of the Burns ranches at Big Valley. One incident recounted by his nephew, Gary Lawrence, years later, was of his uncle seated at the head of a long table, when a young cowhand at the opposite end insulted him. Ted lept right up on the table and ran down it to the other end, where he proceeded to hand out a much needed lesson by hand. He could handle any situation but he was a fair man. He was a judge at the first Hand Hills Stampede in 1919.

Rusty Hollingworth, who described Gardener as about the biggest man you would ever see and red headed — tall and not fat. Close to six feet six inches and must have weighed close to 250 pounds.

Rusty reported, "Once when he and Knobby had a run in about ranch policy and it came to a showdown, Knobby took a good long look at Gardener and said, 'You're about 60 pounds too heavy for me — you better run it', and walked away."

"He was a pretty decent guy that Gardener," extolled Martin. "He came over to borrow my Model-T Ford as he was going to meet Sheady and some millionaires from Boston at the train. He had a flat and had to undo all the lacings we used to tie the spare tire on with, and then pump the tire up with the old pump, when he did get it off. He even bought a new tire for me."

As Sonny Leland says, "He was on the up and up."

Gardener bought in key cowhand V. H. (Sonny) Leland from Stettler, Alta. in April, 1923. Sonny recalled that there was about a foot and half of snow. Also, coming in then were Robert Colvin from Big

Valley, Juan Valdez from Nevis, and Frank Carifel from Stettler.

Sonny recalled further that in 1923 a large hog house and bunk house was built at the home camp.

Adolph Sorken explained, "In about 1923-24 I worked for Taylor and the ranch hired us to haul pigs to town. We hauled 10 pigs to the wagon in 10 wagon loads. They had hundreds of pigs.

"They had a tall building with an upstairs where they put the grain. Down below they had a six-horse stationary engine and that thing ran 24 hours a day. The first man up in the morning had to check that engine for gas and the last man at night. They bought up all the grain the farmers around could sell them and ground it up.

Adolph laughingly remembers another incident at the ranch. "They bought a bull one winter for $1000 and by golly, the bull died the first winter. They didn't want him to be a complete loss, so they attached his hide to a pole with a long chain and made a stone boat which was christened their 'thousand dollar stoneboat'."

Charlie White told of the following incident. "These millionaires from Boston, with lots of money they didn't know what to do with, bought into the ranch a d they would send their boys up here from Boston, and Ed Gillam was supposed to teach them to be cowboys.

"This one boy, he was out there with Gillam all summer. Darn if we didn't get a snowstorm on the fifth of June that year. I remember this boy had been doing pretty well. Anyway after the storm along comes this young fellow from the ranch, says he is going to quit. I said, 'What's the use of quitting, this is nothing'. We tried to coax him to stay, but no way."

I said, "Where are you goin' to?"

He said, "Goin' back to the states."

I said, "What will you do there if there is a storm and you have to feed cattle?"

He said, "Well at least there we can burn the prickles off the cactus, if we have to feed the cattle, but they can't eat snow," laughed Charlie.

"He was so mad, and he did quit! Yes, he did!"

Sonny Leyland felt that when the ranch was in full swing, "there used to be a little over 2000 head, mostly white faces." It took them two days to drive them all to town in Sexsmith and get them loaded on the train in stock cars. Sexsmith at the time had a large stock yard with spacious corrals beside the railroad tracks. This is all part of the past now.

"Mr. Gardener left the ranch in November, 1923 for Calgary. At that time I took Mr. Gardener, Mr. Colvin, Mr. Chase and Mr. Carifell into Sexsmith to the train. It was a very sad day for me," recorded Mr. Leyland.

Young Harmon recalled being down at the ranch one morning when a young English lad newly arrived at the ranch, inquired if there was a horse available for him to ride. "Now Sheady had bought a nice horse, or what he thought was a nice horse, it was really an outlaw and nobody could ride it. Anyway the young lad was going to Sexsmith and was going to ride the Sheady mare."

"His only problem was the mare didn't want to go out of the yard — she balked at the gate. The lad asked Ed Gillam what he would do to get her to go."

"I?" said Ed, "I'd put the spurs to the son of a gun, that's what I'd do."

"So the young lad made his first real mistake, he hit her with those spurs. That mare bruised him up so badly that he couldn't go to town for three days, and when he did go he rode a different horse," laughed Young.

When Mr. Gardener left his position as ranch manager was taken over by W. R. Roy Roberts, who explained in a recent letter, "In 1923, Dean Howes, University of Alberta; was asked by Frank Pike of Edmonton, to recommend someone as manager of the Kleskun Ranch. I had attended university the previous year and was at the time working at the Dominion Experimental Farm, Lethbridge. Dean Howes recommended me. I was called for an interview and got the job."

"When I was hired I was 24 years old, single and received $100 a month plus room and board. I was supposed to work entirely through the secretary, Jim Pike of Edmonton."

"The ranch had the main buildings, corrals, etc. at the home place 16 miles east of Sexsmith, and other camps on the south, west and north — where it was built right into the bank when I arrived."

"There were three flowing wells at the home ranch and flowing wells at the others also so that water was never a problem."

"Out on the lake bottom were some 500 stacks of hay, some of it very good Blue Joint and the balance wide grass slough hay which, as feed, was inferior to good oat straw. This hay had been put on contract during the previous summer by local farmers at $2.50 and $3 per ton."

"When I arrived I found these contracts had not been paid, but as I had no records, I could only refer the farmers to Mr. Pike in Edmonton, who simply passed the buck and referred them back to me — an impossible situation. I found that the tax concession had expired and the share capital was depleted. This meant that the directors would have to put in more money which they were loath to do — hence the stalling in payments."

"The ranch was not popular with the local farmers and homesteaders not only for the show pay for contract work, but several homesteads were in the middle of the ranch lease land. The homesteaders could not afford to fence and the ranch cattle frequently ate up their crops causing some feuds and a small number of the ranch cattle slaughtered."

"I personally was on very good terms with the farmers, whom I found very friendly and hospitable, as I think they knew I was not personally responsible. I was given a credit at the bank to pay current operating expenses such as groceries, etc. (there were always about 15 men to feed and during fall fencing more than that). There was no regular dates for this credit to be sent to the bank; so I myself was often in the same position of having to remind the secretary that I was in need of money. Tom and Eric Nelson worked for me and Eric's wife cooked for us. Then there were the Bert Mackeys', C. M. Clarke, Martin Taylor, the Fraser boys, Ed Gillam and many others whose names I cannot recall."

"For protection the ranch owned two German Lugers, but only one was in the desk when I arrived. I might say that I never had occasion to make any use of it and it was still untouched in the desk when I left."

"When I arrived at the ranch I found there were two very old cars — a Dodge and a Model-T Ford. The Dodge was a total loss but I did manage to get the Model-T running. I set off for Sexsmith (16 miles) but when I wished to come home that evening, I found that the old carbide lamps would not work. I hung a barn lantern on the radiator cap and started for home. However, the radiator leaked so madly that the water broke the glass globe of the lantern and put the light out. I managed to get home with the aid of a flash light. Fortunately in those days there was very little traffic and that, horse-drawn vehicles. Horses then were very afraid of cars and the noise of that old Ford would make them get out of the road quickly. From then on I used horses with a democrat, buckboard, wagon or rode a saddle horse."

"1923 was an open winter and we were able to fence at the north camp until Christmas. We had a carload of wheat to ship but that time there were only two elevators in Sexsmith (the Alberta Pacific, I believe, and the UGG). They were both full."

"As we had a full carload they would order a car and when it came, it had to be loaded immediately through the elevator into the car."

"On Christmas Day the elevator sent word our car was in. The next day the temperatures went down to 40 degrees below F. and stayed that way for two weeks. With the sudden cold, snap, I needed all the men hauling hay so I moved over to the south camp with a four-up of horses and hauled a trip a day for 10 days. I did not have a good team of leaders so I had to sit up on the sleigh and drive all the way. I had on black angora goat chaps, sheepskin moccasins, sheepskin coat, fur hat and bearskin gauntlets, but I was never so cold in my life, before or since. I froze my cheeks and the tip of my nose a bit but never suffered severe freezing and got the car loaded."

"Another time later in the winter the half-breed at the south camp met the hay haulers in the center of the lake and sent word that a young heifer was having difficulty calving and would I come over. It was supper time when the word reached me, but I struck out at once on horse back across country and arrived at the camp about 9 p.m."

"We did what we could but by that time the heifer was in bad shape. I started back. A blizzard came up and my tracks coming over were completely blown in. I attempted to direct the horse, but after a few hours I realized I was lost and that the horse probably knew where home was better than I. So I gave him his head, slack rein, and he brought me home. I was warmly clad but I had to get off occasionally and run beside the horse to keep my feet warm. Another time I had to take cover in one of the vacant camps."

"Certain staple foods were kept in a cupboard for just such an emergency. I took out a package of prunes to thaw. In the morning the package was empty and all my prunes were stuck up in the rafters by pack rats which were always a problem at these camps dug into the sidehill."



Hauling grain across Kleskun Lake, 1934.

"The lake bottom covering a township (six miles square each way) could be a very dangerous place if one was caught in a storm."

"We were very fortunate that we did not lose any men but I was caught in a storm when the snow was so deep that my horse was unable to get through it."

"There was no electricity at that time and a coal-oil lamp could only be seen for a few yards at the best of times. This night I managed to reach an abandoned shed and took shelter in it with my horse — one could not take a chance on being left afoot. There was a little shed for the horse but unfortunately a number of rabbits had died in that shed. I would just get settled when the horse would spook at the rabbits and kick up such a fuss that I spent the night keeping him quieted down. It the morning we were able to make it to a trail and home — tired and hungry. I missed meals so often that for years I never turned down a chance to eat whenever something was offered."

"Knobby Clarke had worked for the ranch before I came and was one of the homesteaders who had trouble with the ranch cattle."

"In World War One he had been a marvelous soldier but was always in trouble. The night before I arrived he had 'shot up' the pool hall in Sexsmith and then attempted suicide but being a crack shot he made sure that he only creased the side of his head. I later met Knobby and we got along fine but on occasion he would go to town, get drunk, and clean up on everyone in sight, but he always brought home a wagon load of groceries."

"At the time I arrived the ranch had about 2000 head of cattle mostly Hereford, but a couple of years previously Hon. Verne Smith, Minister of Agriculture, had put 200 of his purebred Shorthorns on the ranch and that cross resulted in a greatly improved herd. The ranch cattle were not accustomed to anyone on foot. We fed 400 steers at the home corral with open sheds and every cowhand went into the corral with a team and hay rack or on a saddle horse. They (the steers) would not necessarily attack a person but they could stampede and trample anyone on foot."

"When we shipped cattle from Sexsmith we did it all on horse back, even to loading the cars. On the ranch shipping day, every mother in Sexsmith gathered her children and kept them indoors until all the cattle were safely loaded into the stock cars."

"We did have one Texas Longhorn steer at the ranch but where he came from I do not know. He was just a useless show piece."

"We also fed about 200 hogs but the cost of feed and the long winters when cattle had to be fed meant a losing proposition. To save money one of the directors decided to turn the cattle into the hay stacks rather than have the hay hauled to them."

"This was an impossible situation if one hoped to put on hay on the same ground the next year as the field would be covered with old tramped-in stack bottoms."

"I decided to resign and find employment elsewhere."

"A year or two after I left the ranch was broken up and sold to individual farmers."

"In spite of all the difficulties I enjoyed my stay with the ranch and always had very good relations with the Pikes who were my contacts. Knowing that a ranch manager is by virture of his position cut off from too close friendship with the hired hands, I purchased a pipe and tin of tobacco before I left Edmonton and that pipe was a constant companion for many years."

The last ranch manager was Mr. James Burnett, who came in and was there until the ranch sold out on March 22, 1927.

Sarah Moore (now Mrs. Ted Reynolds), worked at the ranch that summer. "Mr. and Mrs. Jim Burnett were there then. He was the manager, Mrs. Burnett cooked and I was the helper. They were really nice people to work for."

"Mostly I remember getting up early in the morning and making all those pancakes. The haying crew was putting up feed for the cattle while I was there, but I never did see the cattle."

"I remember Harold Love, who worked there also, and I had to go out and plant potatoes in the sand ridge; practically in gravel. It was about the most disheartening job, then we had to dig them later on in the fall. They were like little marbles. We've often laughed about it since," laughed Sarah merrily.

"Ed Grant and his father, John Grant Sr., came to look at the ranch during the summer and eventually bought the home ranch. I went back the next year and we were still there when the land was sold. I remember Bob and Art Fenton being there as well as Ed Gillam and Sonny Leyland."

When the ranch began to fold, two rail car loads of machines were brought in and shipped south. There were two hay balers, one tractor, one Martin ditching machine, and four sets of heavy plows. These all went to Edmonton by rail.

To Mr. Purdy's knowledge, the last sale of one thousand head of cattle brought only two cents per pound. The bottom fell out of the market and was the main factor in the failure of the ranch.

George Robinson stated emphatically, "Mike Sheady, who bought a quarter section from McQuitty's (west of town on the Buffalo Lake road, now owned by Harold Olson) bragged when he first came that he would own all the homesteads and farms between Kleskun Lake and Sexsmith before he was through, but he ended up on March 22, 1927 selling. All the Kleskun Lake's junk was sold in only one day at an auction sale, with Ed Holtem as auctioneer."



Auction Sale of the Kleskun Ranch.

Charlie White put it this way, "They had spent too much money, and none was coming back, don't you see? So the whole place went squash. They sold all the prime stuff on the outside, such as Murchie's, Talbot's, Paschetag's, Frasers', Martin Lee's, and of course, Grant's at a good price." Ed Grant's father, as a young man, knew Mike Sheady, that's how they happened to buy.

Martin Lee added, "They sold the whole ranch, most of it to farmers from the south, then when they came to look at it in the spring, here it was all covered with water and they couldn't get near it, so they turned around and left. I bought my quarter in 1927."

According to historical notes by W. H. McEwen, from the provincial archives in Edmonton, "The Grande Prairie Municipality eventually took over most of the ranch for taxes, and it is now owned by the farmers again."

"Ducks Unlimited" became interested in the Kleskun Lakes in the 40's, and again stirred controversy pro and con. George Robinson, who was very much in favor of damming the lake and fought hard for it wrote, "The following was the deal that the council of the Municipal District of Grande Prairie No. 739 were offered: The municipality must acquire the few quarters out on the lake which would be flooded. This was all they had to do, this should not be too difficult, the assessment roll could be used if the owner became difficult. And this is what "Ducks Unlimited" would do — all the engineering work, surveying, etc.; build the dam necessary to hold the water at its original level. They would police it while the muskrats were increasing to a sufficient number to attract trapper leases — and then give the whole thing back to the M.D. 739 — and they turned that down."

What a large portion of the lake has become is a community pasture, for sheep as well as cattle. Once again cattle graze on the Kleskun and cowboys herd them and every spring the lake floods again and attrains a little of the glory that once gained it the name of "one of the finest migratory birds resting and breeding grounds in the west and probably in Canada," before the "greed of man changed it all."

Miscellaneous Anecdotes

KLESKUN LAKE GRAZING RESERVE

Kleskun Lake, the former home of buffalo muskrats, cattle and man (that tried to farm its peaty bottom), started to change its profile. The mile of waving hay were dotted with fast growing clumps of trees and willows pushing the haying crews closer to the centre soap holes. Beavers moved into the grass clogged ditches working night and day to finish the job of damming them up. It was a county headache, in 1962 ARDA represented by Gordon Sterling proposed a community pasture. The county, after much thought, approved the proposal. The project started with a bang. Bud Clumph and Bill Robertson set a charge of dynamite in an ice covered beaver dam. The charge blew, the ice broke and they fell in.

Contracts were given out in November 1967 to Elmer Eslinger to clear 650 acres. In May, 1968, Ben Smashnuk was awarded the contract of burning and repiling, also fencing 8½ miles of sheep fence. The lake supplied the hordes of mosquitoes and the sub terrain water just below the spongy soil surface.

Sheep were entered into the 3½ section pasture in 1968. J. Laramie was hired as manager. The fall lambs graded very high. The first venture was a success!

Semens Telephone and Power Construction of Grande Prairie built seven miles of 4 strand fence in September 1968. In October, Lyle Adams broke, worked down and seeded 220 acres. The power line was cleared in February, 1969, and the house and barn were available for the '69 season. Corrals were also constructed by Ben Smashnuk.

George Audit managed the pasture from 1969-1971. Tom Sorken was manager in 1972. Norman Love managed it from 1973 to 1977.

The largest amount of livestock to enter in one year were 2700 cattle and 1300 sheep in 1975. There are now 51 miles of fence to care for. Six sections are developed. There are 2300 acres more to be burned and broken.

The mosquitoes are still there, the white mud is just below the surface, and the beavers still would like to make it a home.

As the Cree Chief said when he lost his buffalo in a soap hole "Geemento, let pale-face have Kleskun."

KLESKUN LAKE DEVIL — by Oliver Talbot

Way down east below the Kleskun Peaks
Where the yellow slough glass grows so tall,
Leo Nelson and Oliver Talbot had a
roundup late in the fall.
One long lost yearling that hadn't been
seen for days
Got his long horns chiseled and his
old hide sizzled
In a most artistic way.
Said Nelson to Talbot as they threw
this big calf down
"Getting tired of this cow racket,
let's say we jog to town"
They started out at a right smart lope.
There weren't no sign of a ride
Them was the days two cowboys could
oil up their insides.
At the old Sexsmith bar they stopped
Twas the end of the moonshine row
Those boys got tight sometime that night
They were about 30 drinks below
They started back for the Kleskun Flats
Each packing a damn good load
When who should they meet but the
devil himself
Just a prancing down the road.
"Goddamn you ornery cowboy skunks
You'd better hunt your holes
Cause I'm the Devil from the Kleskun Peaks
I've come to gether your souls."
"Be deviled to, goddamn you" said Nelson.
"We boys both know we're tight
But before you corral any cowboys' soul
You sure will have one beautiful fight."
He threw his loop and he threw her straight
—It spun down good and true
He took the devil by the pointed horns
And his skinny neck was in there too
Old Talbot was a lariat man
His cut line coiled up neat
He threw his loop as a true duce
and stretched the devils hind feet
So he stretched him out and layed
him down
While the sizzling irons grew hot
They trimmed his horns with a
dehorning saw
And they branded him a lot
They tied four knots in the old boys tot
And left him there for a joke
With a whoop and a cough, they rode
right off
Down among them Kleskun Oaks.
If you ever go riding in the Kleskun Hills
And you hear one helluva wail
You'll know its the devil as he
yowls and prowls
With the knots tied in his tail.

Twilight



Family Histories

HUGO AND MARGARET ARNDT

Margaret, daughter of John and Aganeta Workentin and Hugo Robert son of William and Emma Arndt were married in Lethbridge, Alberta, January 16, 1930. At the time of their wedding, stories were already circulating about reasonably priced land available in the Peace River area.

By the 24th of June the newlyweds were on their way to a new home. They had purchased one-half section of land southeast of Grande Prairie which had belonged to the late Stewart Newton.

The house was already built of logs and siding. It had an ample kitchen and living-dining room on the main floor, and contained three bedrooms on the second floor. It was necessary to walk to an outdoor toilet, whatever the weather. Heat came from a wood burning heater and cook stove and light from kerosene lamps.

Hugo converted the one standing granary into a barn as the original one was threatening to cave in. An existing well provided adequate water with the help of a cistern to store it.

One hundred and twenty acres of the land was already broken and another ninety more Hugo laboriously broke by hand brushing, followed by a brush plow and hand picking of the debris of roots left in its path.

Margaret and Hugo spent fifteen years in their new home. These were depression years filled with hard work. At times livelihood was difficult but their love

and devotion to one another, a sense of humor, prayers and good management kept them on top. They were happy.

Wheat and oats were planted with horse-drawn machinery. In the fall the grain was cut and formed into sheaves with a binder pulled by a small tractor. Hugo rode the binder and entrusted manipulation of the tractor to Margaret. He managed to engineer a method whereby he could control movement of the tractor from the binder. On occasion Margaret found herself stopped short just as she and the tractor were picking up speed and executing some fancy maneuvers.

Next, the sheaves must be stooked. Margaret became a legend in her time. No one, but no one could stook as quickly as she. Later community threshing crews harvested the grain. The grain was sold, of course, along with cream, milk and eggs also produced on their farm. Vegetables canned and stored from their large gardens, canned beef and poultry plus the produce from cows and chickens fed them comfortably through the long cold winters.

For many years to come Margaret would be known for her love for chickens and her ability to raise them. Her humble beginning began that first year in Grande Prairie. She had six hens and one rooster which were allowed to roam at will about the farm. Unusual as it may sound she gathered seven to eight eggs a day from her six contented hens.

Soon they were ready to experiment with greater things like cross breeding. The parents were Black Manurkany and Brown Leghorns. Their offspring filled the farm yard with an array of color; blue chickens, grey chickens, white, brown and black. Somehow the variety wasn't too pleasing and it was decided they would settle down to a straight breed the next year.

Arndts' three children were all born in Grande Prairie hospital. The first, an 8 pound 1 ounce baby gril, Emma Margaret, on January 8, 1931. Both she and her brother Arthur Hugo, born June 5, 1934 were brought home in the family's 1928 Chevrolet. When the last child, Helen Dorothy, was born on January 1st, 1936 it was 58 degrees below zero. Clutching a bassinette wherein lay their well bundled baby, Hugo and Margaret climbed into a three bottom bob sleigh with a canvas top, and small stove inside, to make the journey home. Their excited five year old daughter and 19 month old tow headed son met them at the door. Little Arthur slipped back the baby's bonnet and exclaimed, "It's a kitty!"

The children attended Grande Prairie public school transported by neighborhood car pools on nice days, but, deep snow and cold winter days necessitated the use of horse-drawn sleighs. First, Hugo and his neighbor Percy Newton had to break trail with a homemade snow plow the day before. There were times their work was in vain as night winds would have filled their trail with drifted snow by the next morning.

Entertainment was centred around family and neighbors. It came in the form of skating, riding, sleighing, berry picking and dances and card socials at one another's homes.

In 1945 Hugo had opportunity to move back to Lethbridge area and farm a choice one section piece of land. He made arrangements to rent his farm in Grande Prairie to Chester Hillmer, three years later he sold it to Everett Sheehan.

Their farewell party held at John Mareks home has always remained fondly in their memory, along with the other experiences shared with neighbors in the community.

Today Hugo and Margaret are retired and living in Red Deer, Alberta. Their son, a T.V. and radio technician lives with his wife and two daughters on an acreage near Sylvan Lake, where he owns an Electrical Applicance and Repair Shop. Arlene (Lyal), his wife, is from Milk River, Alberta. She is a Home Economics Teacher. Both Emma and Helen are registered nurses.

Emma married a Civil Engineer, Jack Gregg from Rycroft, Alberta. They have five children and live in Calgary.

Helen and her husband Mich Mishelsu from Stirling, Alberta have lived all over Canada since he is employed by the government, and are presently residing in Edmonton with their two daughters.

— by Helen Michelsu (experiences told to her by her parents).

R. C. BACON

It was in the spring of 1954 that we, Dick and Fay Bacon, took up residence at 10-72-5-W6, the former Gerald Carveth farm in the Twilight District.

Dick and his father had made several trips throughout the Peace Country in 1953 in search of farm



Bacon built — 1970, and Dick Bacon.

land. They felt this to be a young man's country with lots of room to expand. Both were raised on farms in the Ft. Saskatchewan area. Fay had taught school and Dick had just returned from a stint with the American Army in Korea.

We moved here via the old highway — Smith, Slave Lake and High Prairie, a distance of about 380 miles. We had to leave Ft. Saskatchewan by 6:00 A.M. to get to the farm by supper time. The only local pavement then was from the Smoky bridge to the "Four-Mile-Corner."

Our first years were especially busy as we remodelled the farm to suit ourselves. This meant taking down the windmill and installing a pressure system and septic tank, changing from coal to gas heating, taking down fences, corrals and the old log house and hog barns, doing a bit of brushing and rock picking; straighten and enlarge fields for more economical farming with large equipment. Dick landscaped the yard and Fay planted trees and more trees through the years.

At first we farmed three quarters of land, then bought the fourth quarter of that section from Rupert Carveth six years later. In 1964 when Rupert retired, we purchased his other two quarters.

Sons, Jim, Max and Dean, born in 1955, 1957, and 1962 added to our pleasures. At an early age they went to the fields to pick roots on brushing, or the usual rocks every spring. They never did like it, but with Mother's help it didn't seem nearly so bad. Probably the first machine they learned to operate was the lawn mower — as Mother added to the size of the lawn each year.

Dick built the boys a miniature car which they painted orange. Many will remember seeing it parked at the end of our lane where they left it to catch the bus to Harry Balfour School in Grande Prairie. It is too too bad there was no odometer on it, for they must have chalked up hundreds of miles through the years.

Dick has been called one of the "buildingest" people in the Peace. The hub of a great deal of his activities is the machine shop. Here he built an electric drill press, a small utility tractor and a jet river boat, as well as cabs for two combines, swather and crawler tractor, and laminated trusses for a 32 x 70 foot machine shed. But most unique among his projects is his "Baconbilt" tractor. It is a four-wheel drive, weighing 14,000 pounds, measuring 18.4 feet in length and 8.8 feet in width. It put out 130 horsepower. The cost was about $17,000 for material and some 800 hours of manual labour.

The grain elevator was another project. Dick logged the lumber and trucked it from the bush one hundred miles south of Grande Prairie. At the time, the Alberta Lands and Forest Department was building a trunk road from Goodwin to Hinton. On the right-of-way was a stand of merchantable pine which had to be taken off before spring. Dick put in a bid and got the timber at half the usual stumpage. Neighbors Ross Atkinson, Errol Blimkie, Bill and Bob Wendt and Art Maile got in on it too, and we spent all of the month of October logging and piling. Fay, Jim and Max made the cookhouse "home" for the month. We worked hard but also had some good times, with moose hunting and



Fay and Dick Bacon and sons.

all. The elevator was built in 1962, the year our third son was born. Fay cooked for six men right up until time to go to the hospital to give birth to Dean.

When the boys were all in school, Fay returned to the classroom too and for seven years she enjoyed substitute teaching. Another pleasure was guiding school classes or other groups on farm tours. Often the pioneering Carveths were included to speak to the groups and answer questions.

Dick had the reputation for operating some pretty old equipment. He had two Massey-Harris combines, 1941 and 1948 models, that he operated for 23 and 30 years respectively. They were purchased for $2,600 and $3,800 and for five years Dick followed the Wartime Massey-Harris Brigade, combing from Oklahoma, through Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming,



Neighbors of Bacons. L. to R.: Ted and Evelyn Gammon, Annie Kuykendall, Dick Bacon, Elmer Chugg, Gene Kuykendall, Bertha Chugg and Iris Carveth.

Nebraska, South and North Dakota and finishing at his father's farm at Ft. Saskathcewan in Alberta. For Dick there was a certain prestige in operating these combines year after year and keeping them in top condition. They were built to last, and last, and last. He has two International Harvester grain trucks of the same vintage that he takes pride in too, and both are still operating thirty years later. Three generations of Bacons have driven them.

Ours has been a family farm with all members pitching in through the years. Our roots are deep in the community, but raising our three fine sons we feel, has been our greatest accomplishment. We worked together, and we played together too. Every opportunity was taken for camp-outs, river trips, camper excursions, skiing, ice fishing and a bit of flying too.

Jim, Max and Dean have spent much of their youth in the shop and on the land and could probably be farmers some day if they choose. Presently Jim is taking Aircraft Mechanics at S.A.I.T., he and his wife Karen (nee Wardill) make their home in Calgary. Max is at N.A.I.T. taking Industrial Mechanics. Dean, at fourteen, is undecided about his future.

The years here have been rewarding.

GEORGE S. AND RUTH BAYLEY

George S. Bayley and Ruth Bayley, both born in Ontario, moved to Grand Prairie from Valor, Saskatchewan, a small railway siding near Assiniboia where George has been renting a farm.

George had two boys and two girls: Orval born in January, 1917, Elmer July 1918, Vera, October, 1919 and Audrey, 1921 when his first wife died of T.B., after months in the Sanitorium.

After he had remarried, George and Ruth with their daughter Betty and George's oldest son Orval moved to Grande Prairie the spring of 1929, leaving Elmer, Vera and Audrey with relatives until they could find a place to live and get settled.

They lived in Grande Prairie in what was then known as Moccasin Flats until that fall, when they moved to Oliver Johnson's farm to work for Mr. Johnson in the Twilight District.

In January, 1930 Twilight School opened and Orval then in grade seven was one of its first students. Elmer then joined the family and also went to Twilight School.

George and Ruth's second daughter Gladys was born on the Johnson farm in July, 1930 with Dr. Little from Grande Prairie in attendance. That September at home, Gladys died of the flu and was buried in the Grande Prairie cemetery.

George had filed on a homestead in the Crooked Creek District and that fall moved to Crooked Creek where they raised a family of 14. (Six boys and eight girls.)

George came back some falls to do threshing in the area and both Orval and Elmer returned from time to time to work in the area also.

Some of the places I can remember they worked on were I. V. Macklin, and Ernie Patterson farms.

Elmer was killed overseas in active service January 27, 1945. Orval also a veteran died of a heart attack September 5, 1963.

George died of cancer February 4, 1951. Ruth Bayley now lives in Grande Prairie in Aurora Court Apartments.

Betty (Mrs. Tom Belford) also lives in Grande Prairie, the only other member of the family still living in this immediate area.

LAFE BEMBOW FAMILY — by Lafe Bembow, November, 1976

I was born August 16, 1888 on a farm in Clarke County, Iowa, U.S.A. My parents and grandparents were all farmers. When I was 22 years old (1910) I married Mabel, the only daughter of Baxter D. Patterson. We lived on a farm south of Truro, Iowa on the old Baxter Patterson place. During this time we had two sons, Kenneth in 1911 and Keith in 1914. Our third son was born here in 1923 and a year later on January 21, 1924 my wife died.

Kenneth and Keith batched until December, 1925, when I married Edith Arnett. Part of this period Baxter Patterson lived with us. Ivon was born the next year.

We moved to Canada in 1928. The weather was real cold. Rex Patterson (Mabel's brother) met us at the train with the sleigh and horses and brought us out to



Lafe, Mabel and son, Kenneth, Benbow, in 1912.

his place in Glen Leslie. Kenneth remembered it was so cold that we stopped at the Glen Leslie store to get warm before going four miles.

We moved to a place six miles northeast of Grande Prairie, called the Axon place (S.E. Section 4-72-5-W6th) which was owned by Baxter Patterson and we farmed here for three years. Some of our close neighbours were — Carveths, Mailes, Swansons, Harrisons and Dixons. We farmed with horses; had around twenty. Edith's brother, Bill Arnett lived with us for a time.

Edith's sister Adda had married Guy Patterson, another brother of Mabel's and they along with Walt Arnett were farming at Glen Leslie. This was one of the reasons we went to the Grande Prairie area — to visit our relatives and see the much talked about Peace River Country.

While we lived here the "Twilight School" was built and I was one of the first trustees. Keith went to school there.

From the Axon place we moved to the Shortreed place right beside Fred Boyd's in the Crystal Creek area. They were wonderful neighbours and we played cards with them many a long evening. Another son Wayne was born here (1932). Just the towns had real churches, but church was held in homes or community halls built by the local people where all entertainment was held. There was one near us — "The Club Hall" which was used a lot. It had been built on Fred Boyd's place as a community church and later moved a couple of miles north to a new site where it stood as a hall and was used for many years.

Dances cost 50c a person in the hall. But if you didn't dance, you didn't have to pay. When dances were held in the homes, they were free, only a donation towards the music was collected. We would travel to dances in sleigh or bob sled, filled with neighbours. There was always lots of eats and hot coffee at the dances as everybody took lunch.

Ivon and Keith went to school at Crystal Creek while we lived here. From the Shortreed place, after staying three years, we moved to Mrs. Turners place, two miles north of Glen Leslie post office and store. This place is now on the north of a paved highway but we lived there before the highway was built.

Times were hard while we were in Canada but the wonderful neighbours we had made up for everything.

During our stay in Canada my parents came to visit us in 1929. A few years after Kenneth went back, Keith went back too, he also lived with my sister and brother-in-law. Keith married Ruth Ann Harbour in 1942. They had 10 children. One son Terry was killed in an accident in 1963. The other children's names are; Michael, Dawn, Dennis, Joyce, Richard, Rita, Paul, Marcia and Jean. They now live in Raleigh, North Carolina.

In November, 1963 we had a farm sale and prepared to go back to Iowa once more. The trip took about nine days. In the spring of 1937 we started farming again near New Virginia, Iowa. We stayed there one year and then moved to a farm in Union County where we stayed seven years. Then we bought a farm one mile southeast of Afton, Iowa, where we stayed 23 years. In 1969 we retired, sold the farm and bought a house in Afton, Iowa a small town where we still live.

We are both 88 years old and in pretty good health. I still drive my own car and we go visiting quite a lot and play cards with lots of good neighbours. Ivon is married and lives in Louisville, Kentucky.

Wayne lives in Creston, Iowa about 10 miles from us, he runs a used car business.

I have had a wonderful life and have so many good friends. We made a few trips back to the Grande Prairie area and really enjoyed seeing all the good friends we had there. We think about you all often but are not able to travel so far to visit you again, except in memories.

JOYCE AND ERROL BLIMKE — (March, 1976)

My parents are Albert and Martha Blimke. I was born in 1923 and took all of my schooling at Five Mile Creek with the exception of one year of high school in Grande Prairie.



Top Left: Freda Reeks of England, Linda Harris, Errol Blimke and Mary Harris. Bottom: Sandra Blimke, Rita Bennitt, Darrell Blimke and Joyce Blimke (seated).

In 1947, I took a homestead lease on N.E.¼ 11-72-5-W6 and received title to the land in 1954. This land was a school section situated four miles north and five and one-half miles east of Grande Prairie.

In 1952 I married Joyce Harris, daughter of Frank Harris of the Kleskun Hill district. We have two children, Darrell, age seventeen and Sandra age six. We now farm one section of land; the crops are mainly grass seed, oil seed and grains. We also grow a vegetable garden, keep chickens and a milk cow.

The farming is done with tractors and the house is heated with diesel fuel. We have electricity and the water supply is from a deep well by the house and connected to a pressure system.

The main recreation for the family is camping in summer. In the winter Joyce's hobby is painting and I do some ice fishing. We also do some visiting with neighbors and attend a few dances and card parties.

MR. AND MRS. JOHN BLIMKE SR. — (Story and quotes told by Bill Blike)

Learning of available homestead land in the Peace River Country, John Blimke, in June of 1911 left Ren-

frew, Ontario to look at this Grande Prairie Country first hand. At this time he was forty years of age.

He came to Edson, Alberta by train and there he met two fellow travellers and they bought tickets on a stage owned by a Mr. Taft, which was to take them to Grande Prairie. After travelling some miles from Edson the road came to an end; so the three men with one pack horse walked to Grande Prairie.

After travelling around the Grande Prairie area for some time looking at the land, he first filed on S.W. 33-71-5-W6th, three miles east and one mile north of Grande Prairie in 1911. He filed on this land because it was "The Best in the West." There was quite a lot of prairie with some bluffs of poplar and a few willow sloughs. It was also a very quiet and beautiful place with the snow caps of the Rocky Mountains visible in the southwest on clear sunny days.

There was his wife Martha, one daughter Agnes and five sons, Albert, John, Martin, William and Allen. At this time they were still in Renfrew. John Sr. went back to Renfrew in August and returned in 1912 with his son Albert, age 16, who filed by proxy on N.W.¼ 28-71-5-W6 three miles east and half mile north of Grande Prairie. This time they came in early spring and with horses and sleighs; they brought in some settlers effects and a few pieces of machinery. That summer they built a small house on John Blimke's homestead. That winter they hauled out building logs from across Bear Creek.

In the spring of 1913, while Albert did chores, John Blimke along with a neighbor, Windy Smith, drove out to Edson to meet his two sons, John Jr. and Martin, and brothers August and Gustave, who had come from Renfrew, along with two carloads of freight and more horses. That spring his son, John Jr., and brothers August and Gustave also filed on land close by. After building a house on Gustave's land that summer, August and Gustave returned to Renfrew.



Allen Blimke skidding a moose out of the Wapiti River banks, south of Five Mile school.

In the spring of 1914, while John Jr. and Martin did chores, John Blimke Sr. and son Albert with sleighs and horses went to Edson to pick up the rest of his family. This included his wife, Martha, daughter Agnes, and sons William and Allen. They picked up food and building supplies. At this time the cattle had been shipped along with more household effects and machinery. The cattle were herded on foot behind the sleighs; this was William's job until he froze his feet, then they were herded by Miss Martha Hanniman, sister of Mrs. Gustave Blimke, who was also in the caravan. William was thirteen and Allen was six.

In 1915 John Blimke Sr. and his sons built a large two-storey house from hewn logs. His brother August, who was a carpenter, supervised the building and much of the finishings. The interior was finished with lumber from Buffalo Lakes, Cady and Evans Saw Mill. This house was one of the finest in the country at that time and stood until around 1970 when it was burned down by vandals.

In the early days card parties, dances and just plain parties were held in the Blimke home. Picnics on Sundays, berry picking and cookouts were very popular at this time. The men played horse shoe or baseball on the open pieces of prairie.

Travelling was done with horses and wagons in summer or sleighs in winter. Horseback was also a popular way to travel. John Blimke bought his first car in 1928. It was a Chrysler.

William went to Five Mile Creek School for one year. Allen also took his schooling there. The school was built in 1914 by Jimmy Fortier. It was located two miles north and four miles east of Grande Prairie on the west bank of Five Mile Creek. Max Sutherland owns the land now. The drinking water for the school was taken from the creek, which only flowed in the spring but there were deep pools of water that lasted all summer.

The first teacher was Miss Moody. She rode horseback from Clairmont, summer and winter a distance of about seven and a half miles. She gave the class enough homework to finish their books by midterm. The school was moved with horses in 1926 to the present location four miles east of Grande Prairie.

Agnes, William and Allen lived on the original John Blimke homestead until 1940 when William built a new house on the southeast quarter of the same section, land they had acquired from Phil Briley in 1926. Agnes is now deceased but William and Allen are still living here and farm five quarters of land.

John Blimke Sr. always had a big garden with a large variety of vegetables and small fruits. He liked gardening very much. William and Allen still have a good garden.

In the early days they grew oats, wheat and barley; much the same grains as today, only now the varieties are somewhat earlier. They farmed with horses until the early forties when they got a Caterpillar D2 tractor which they still use, along with two more tractors. They still heat the house with wood and have an air-tight heater. The family now has all passed away except for William, who is 75, and Allen, who is 68.

THE CARVETH FAMILY — by Rita Carveth Purser

When our Father, Arthur W. Carveth had gradually acquired first a flour and grist mill at Leskard, Ontario, second a larger one at Orono, Ontario (take the "t's" out of Toronto and you have Orono, a Huron Indian word meaning beautiful) and third an office and elevator at Newcastle on the Grand Trunk Railway that ran between Toronto and Montreal, he discovered



Rita Carveth.

that his easy-going habits of fishing and hunting in spare time were no longer possible. He determined to go to the Peace River country where he was sure that he could resume the old ways. He sold the business leaving son Cecil, to tie up the odds and ends. (Cecil had been in charge of the Newcastle business and Rupert had operated the grist mill at Leskard but had gone to Saskatchewan shortly before this time.) Dad set out for Edson, Alberta with a carload of settler's effects.



Wedding — Gerald Carveth and Gladys Clarkson, Oscar Raison, Rita Carveth.

Rupert met Dad in Edson where they discovered that the Trail had not been cut out all the way to Grande Prairie so they were advised to leave their wagons at Edson and travel by pack horse. They started out over the newly blazed Edson Trail in June, 1911. The blazes evidently were not too frequent as they got off once and were put back on the Trail by an Indian.

After reaching Grande Prairie, Dad wrote Mother asking her to put me in a dressmaking shop to learn to sew. If I could not make our clothes, both of us would be obliged to wear blankets as there were no dressmakers in the whole district. I finished first year high school on the last day of June and on the second day of July, I was in Miss Jessie Atkinson's (a niece of Joe Atkinson of "Toronto Star" fame) sewing room overcasting the seams of the dresses of Newcastle's nice people.

Miss Atkinson was very kind — the first month that I was there she cut out and fitted a white skirt and blouse which I stitched up. From then on I made all of my Mother's and my suits, dresses and top coats, until I got too old to manage it. So there was no history of blanket-wearing in our family. Even the male members had their pyjamas and work shirts stitched up at home. I had spent five months at the dressmaking shop.

A Mr. Burke was the first man to file on land at the newly opened Land Office in Grande Prairie on the 15th day of July, 1911, my Father was second and Rupert third. Everyone then went back to Edson to get complete outfits to bring back, after first putting up a shack on the home land. The rains started in September making the Edson Trail almost impossible to use and there was no other road than the long Athabasca Trail via Edmonton. Mr. Burke got halfway to Grande Prairie but had so much trouble that he turned around and abandoned his land claim. Elsewhere is told the story of how our Father lost his horses and had to leave his outfit piece by piece on the trail. But he and Rupert, joined by Cecil, who had arrived in time for all the grief, did finally get back to Grande Prairie. In December when the muskegs were frozen, they managed to get the trunks and other possessions picked up and got Dad to Edson in time for him to arrive in Newcastle on Christmas morning, 1911.

We had a sale of some furniture and having bought another team of horses, four cows, two pigs, chickens, geese and ducks, with the necessary household stuff, Dad left the packed car on the railway track for a short time unlocked. When he returned, all of Mother's down pillows, which she had plucked from the geese for years before, had been stolen, with some other things as well. This is the last thing that I remembered about Newcastle.

Dad's sister, Dr. Annie Higbee, her husband Chas. E. Higbee a mathematics professor, with their son John Carveth Higbee, who had been living in California for years, insisted on going to Grande Prairie with us. Dad had tried very hard to dissuade Aunt Annie from going but she was determined. Later, when the mosquitoes were so bad she was heard to say "Arthur, why

didn't you tell me about these mosquitoes?" As though that would have stopped that determined lady.

Dad bought five oxen to complete our loads. The government had confiscated these oxen as they had been too tightly packed in a car, so I had to drive this odd ox, Mike, hitched to the cutter, in the morning with the bales of hay and feed for the noon stop for horses, oxen, cows, pigs and poultry. It was nearly always too cold to ride, so I walked to keep warm. In the afternoon I drove the four cows which became a problem if we were obliged to stop for any reason. These cows seemed to think that they had business at the north pole and they were not stopping enroute. I had to cut through the bush to head them off and then I wasn't quite sure how to get out of there as the trees were so thick and snow covered everything making all areas look alike.

After a roll of tar paper was lost, meaning that half of our shack would later have rain coming through the roof, I had to drive Mike at the end of the procession to pick up anything that fell off the loads and sometimes it was a lonely, eerie business when some untoward thing had held us up until after dark. I can recall having to hold my brother's horses while he went forward to help the more inexperienced drivers two miles down the hill into the stopping place, then walk back up to drive his own team down with Mike and me and the cutter following after. It is very quiet in the moonlight, two miles away from anyone else with the temperature forty below zero. Even the wolves howls must have been frozen.

We ran out of bread, having started with one hundred loaves so Mother made some more at a stopping place and then we used bannock, a mixture of flour, some rising and salt and cooked in a frying pan on top of the stove which was spiked to the floor of the caboose.

The hills were so steep and so long that moving the caboose was an adventure. Sometimes a number of us would run, and climb on the high side of the caboose to keep it from rolling over and down the steep hillside a mile or two to the bottom. More than one load containing a piano, met that fate.

I shall never forget our first sight of the "promised land" after we had crossed the Big Smoky river and had climbed the hill on the other side. Our home was about twenty-two miles beyond — a shack eighteen by twenty feet on a long sloping sweep of land. One of our neighbours was a very sweet lady with a beautiful soprano voice, Mrs. Agnes Sproule who was a graduate in voice and piano of Boston Conservatory of music. She was a native of Nova Scotia, and her three children were Donald, Campbell and Dorothea, aged nine, seven and five.

On the Trail we had stayed overnight at the same stopping place as Mrs. Clendenan who had been a Toronto newspaper woman. Also we had met Mrs. Cameron, a Scotswoman whose husband and she later ran the Grande Prairie post office.

My Aunt, Dr. Higbee was the first medical Doctor in the Grande Prairie area, 1912. Most of the time she was sewing up accidents or bringing new babies into the world.

I believe it was in 1919 that I was requested to canvass the district for donations toward the first X-ray machine in the Grande Prairie hospital. Everyone was very willing to donate to that cause.

In 1917 when the high school opened in Grande Prairie, I thought that I was too old to go back but in 1922 I decided to try for Junior Matriculation, going to Alberta College for a few months and the next year was in Grade Eleven in Grande Prairie where I had a wonderful year studying and playing hockey and baseball with the youngsters. That led me on to a position as the T. Eaton Co.'s first dietitian in Winnipeg in 1926. A breakdown a while later led me to Victoria early in 1930 where my parents had decided to take a holiday. I was too ill to be moved when their rail tickets were about to expire, so Dad bought a house and we settled here where I regained my health and Dad enjoyed ten years before passing on at 78. Mother lived until October, 1962, two months short of her 94th birthday.



Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Carveth on their Golden Wedding day.

In January of 1977, Cecil Carveth and his wife are living in Newcastle, Ontario where he went in December, 1915, after proving up his homestead and a scrip in Grande Prairie.

Rupert and Rita are living in Victoria, B.C., as Rupert and his wife Iris (Hayter) make their annual trip to Valleyview to visit daughter Jean Roberts, husband Douglas and the five grandchildren.

Gerald is the only one of the family to remain in Grande Prairie where he and his wife Gladys (Clarkson) enjoy the northern hospitality and occasionally visit James and wife Lina (Anderson) in Calgary with two grandsons, daughter Betty and Jim Dunn with three grandsons and two great-grandchildren in Edmonton and daughter Edna and Dick Jolly and the four grandchildren in Vermilion.

ELMER AND BERTHA CHUGG

I (Bertha Chugg) was born in a private nursing home in Red Deer. My parents lived in Haynes, Alberta and moved to Athabasca when I was 18 months old. I have two sisters and one brother. I grew up on a farm two and one-half miles east of Athabasca. I learned to do every kind of job that a man must do on the farm. However, at the age of 19 I entered the Royal Alexandra Hospital School of Nursing, graduating in 1948. I then worked in Manning, Alberta for one year.

I arrived in Grande Prairie in the evening of November 15, 1949. It was raining at the time and there wasn't any sign of snow. I could not believe that there wasn't snow at this time of the year. Everywhere we went there was nothing but mud, mud, mud! I worked as a Registered Nurse in the Grande Prairie Hospital until August 12, 1951. It was during this time that I met Elmer.

I would like to mention three of the highlights during my stay in Grande Prairie. The first one was the opening of the Grande Prairie Municipal Hospital. We were so thrilled with the modern furniture and fixtures. Every room had colored matching hospital furniture (now obsolete). Everyone counted it a real pleasure to be scheduled to work in the new area.

The second highlight was a visit to the Gerald Carveth farm, now the R. C. Bacon farm, in late June of 1951. The countryside was a lush green and as I viewed the beautiful scenerey I mused that some day I would return. Little did I know that I would one day be living on the farm directly north of the Carveth farm.

My third highlight concerns the trips that Stan and Laura Magill, Elmer and I took. We went by boat down the Wapiti River from O'Brien Park to the Smokey Bridge. On another occasion we went by car to Lake Azouzetta, west of Dawson Creek.

However the lure of the bright lights and a life in the city led me away from Grande Prairie and on to such places as Spokane, Montreal, Quebec City, New York and Regina. After leaving Grande Prairie, I worked in the Whissell Clinic in Westlock for eight months and in September of 1952, I went to Montreal



Elmer Chugg family, 1973. B. Row — Michael, Katherine and Bradford, Mrs. Bertha Chugg, Wendy, Leslie, and Mr. Elmer Chugg.



1950 Board Members and Nursing Staff at the opening of the second floor of the old wing.

and completed a five month Post Graduate course in Obstetrics and Gynecology. After this, I settled in Regina for two and one-half years, March 23, 1953-November 8, 1955. Elmer and I were married in Athabasca November 16, 1955, after which we made our home in the Grande Prairie area.

Elmer came to the Grande Prairie area with his parents when he was six years old and has never left the area. He started school the next fall at the Kleskun Lake School which was situated at the bottom of Turner's Hill.

During the depression in the "dirty thirties" people were very hard up financially. Elmer recalls in 1932 when his Father shipped a carload of seed oats to Eastern Canada there wasn't enough money received from the oats to pay the total freight bill. He had to dig into his pocket to finish paying for the freight.

Elmer and Jimmy Cochrane became very good friends as school boys. Jimmy would ride Elmer on the handle bar of his bike from the Kleskun Lake School to Bill Wendt's corner. At that time Elmer's parents lived on the Waller place. Jimmy and Elmer used to go to the spring which is on Bill Wendt's farm and play before continuing on their way home.

When he was about 12 years old, Elmer made three pairs of cross-country skis. He used pieces of 1' by 4' wood. He used tin cans to make the turned up ends. The children would ski across the fields to school, Elmer carrying Laura on his shoulders.

Elmer loved nature and the outdoor life. He liked hunting, fishing, boating and exploring the wilds. He was 12 years old when he shot his first deer on his Father's farm. When he was 13 or 14 his Dad took him and Leslie Miles to the Burnt Hills to hunt big game. On the evening that he shot his first moose there, it was 35 degrees below zero. On another occasion in 1941, Elmer went hunting with Dave Turner south of Goodwin in the Sandy Lake area. The snow was three to four feet deep. A chinook came up and within two days most of the snow was gone. The horses had to pull the sleigh home through the mud.

When Elmer was 15 years old, his Father became quite ill and in the spring he had to leave school to do the farming. He seeded 240 acres by himself, using six horses pulling the spring tooth harrows and the drill. The crop yield that year was good.

In 1939 and 1940, the Government sponsored a crow-hunting contest. It was a means of pest control. Elmer and his two brothers won a 22 rifle as first prize for getting the most crow's legs and eggs.

The Chugg home was the place of many Sunday afternoon gatherings. The neighborhood children felt

free to come and play ball or just to enjoy each other's friendship.

Elmer enjoyed his trips to the mountains south of Grande Prairie. In 1942, Jim Cochrane and he took four horses, two saddle and two pack, and went to the Kakwa Lake area where they spent five weeks enjoying nature at its best. Elmer recalls this trip with a touch of nostalgia. On another occasion, in 1945, Jim and Evelyn Cochrane, Elmer and his brother Allan went with pack horses to the same area. They took four pack and four saddle horses and spent three weeks at Kakwa that time.

Elmer and Jim Cochrane enjoyed a life long friendship. As well as their pack horse trips they enjoyed many trips by boat up the Smokey and Wapiti Rivers. They also enjoyed many hunting expeditions.

Elmer played baseball and hockey with the Clairmont Men's team during his teens and early twenties.

In 1950, Elmer built a snowblower to mount on the front end of the tractor. He made his own blueprint and used scrap material from a threshing machine and old binder. He also built his own P.T.O. welder which he used in building the snowblower.

Elmer was active in farming prior to our marriage. He worked on the farm with his Father until 1948. Allan and Elmer then bought the Ellis farm and farmed together until the time of our marriage.

After our marriage, Elmer worked as a mechanic for Waterour Equipment, Stewart Equipment, and the John Deere Company carrying on farming on a part-time basis. In 1960 we bought Elmer's Dad's farm, and in 1966 we bought the Herman Wendt farm.

Our farming is done as a family project with everyone participating. For the past ten years, Elmer has been employed as a Machinery Salesman. He is well known throughout the Peace River Country.



1950 — Snowblower in action built by Elmer Chugg.



The Edgar Chugg Family. Back row: Evelyn, Laura, Norman, Elmer, Allan, Annie and Ruby. Front row: Mrs. Mary Chugg, Luella and Mr. Edgar Chugg.

Our first home was in a little shack situated on Elmer's Dad's property in Grande Prairie. During the following summer, we moved the "shack" to our property which was across the street from the Avondale Grocery. We lived there for three years and then we bought a new home on 111th Avenue. We lived there for two years and then moved to Valleyview for one year where Elmer was the John Deere dealer. On January 28, 1963 we moved to the John Remple farm which we rented for one year. Then in May, 1964 we moved to Elmer's Dad's farm which we had bought in 1960. We lived there for 2½ years and on November 4, 1966 we moved to the Herman Wendt farm. We have lived here for the past ten years.

We have five children, of whom we are very proud. Michael Philip was born June 2, 1957. He is presently attending the University of Alberta for his second term. Bradford Robert, born February 24, 1959, is finishing grade 12 this year at the Composite High School and will graduate in June. Katharine Lilian, born September 29, 1960 on her Grandmother Presho's birthday is in Grade 11 at the Comp. She has attained her grade four theory and grade seven in piano.

These three were fortunate enough to be in the music group at the Comp. which formed the Vienna '76 Group. They toured Europe in July, 1976 and gained much knowledge from this trip. Leslie Anne was born January 23, 1962 and is attending grade nine at Harry Balfour. She has been active in volleyball, and basketball. Last but not least is Wendy Ellen, born January 6, 1967. She is our centennial child and is currently in grade five at Harry Balfour. She is studying piano and french horn.

We have been affiliated with McLaurin Baptist Church since 1955. Each of the children started Sunday School there at the age of two years. They have been active in Sunday School Concerts, Young Peoples, Bapteens and Pioneer Girls. Michael is very active in McKernan Baptist Church in Edmonton. The four older children have sung quartet numbers in Church. I have made a point of seeing that we have attended Sunday School and Church regularly. We feel that our Church has played a great part in helping to form the character of our children and cannot thank enough all those involved in directing our children in the right way of life.

Nine years this past January, I started working as an R.N. on the maternity ward in the Grande Prairie General Hospital on a permanent part-time basis. I held this position for two years and then accepted a position as a permanent part-time 3 - 11 P.M. relief Supervisor, in which I am presently employed.

Three of our main projects on the farm were erecting a 40 foot by 80 foot steel machine shed in 1975 and two steel granaries in 1976. The most recent one was the cleaning of the basement after the flood August 16, 1976, when four feet of water poured in as a result of the highway ditch flooding.

Grande Prairie is a beautiful country and I have loved it here since my first glimpse. It is nice to associate with so many wonderful people in so many different ways.

CHARLES CROMIE — "Twilight School as I Remember It — December 31, 1920 - June 30, 1932"

I don't know that my memories of Twilight are too clear, as an awful lot has happened and several thousand school children have "bugged" me since those good old days when we all were young (that includes me!).



Old West show by Roy Swanson and Bert Harrison.

I had been teaching at Goodfare School from July 1 to December 15, 1929. The school only operated in the summer so I was unemployed. However, my application for Twilight was accepted to begin on the first of January.

I arrived in Grande Prairie in the late afternoon of December 31 and was met by Gerald Carveth with a team and cutter. It seems to me that we went directly to the school where there was a dance being held as a New Year's dance and as an official school opening.

Gerald told me quite a bit about the organization of the new school and of the people who lived in the district. He particularely mentioned that young ladies were rather scarce in the immediate area, but there



Decorations for Dance-Twilight — by Charles Cromie.

was one he would introduce me to. He told me I would board at his place, and I did all the time I was there.

When we did go into the school, he pointed out Violet Harrison dancing a schottische with Ollie Moon (Moln?) I was not particularly impressed.

The school was brand-new, extremely up-to-date for that time, and the small school district consisted of mostly well-to-do farmers. I believe no one had to come more than two miles to school. Everything was new and there was no trouble with books and materials.

I don't really remember who was in my first class, but I do remember that starting at the northeast on moving clockwise there were the Carveths, An Orville Bailey, the Maile's, the Swanson's, the Mills, the Benbows, the Marek's and the Harrisons.

The school was the centre of the social life of the district.

For the first six months I think I had only grades one to seven, but in September, Violet Harrison, Marguerite Mills and Keith Benbow started in Grade IX, and continued the next year in Grade X. I was twenty years old by then and I believe Violet and Marguerite were eighteen and Keith was seventeen when they first enrolled in Twilight.

I taught there for three and a half years, and moved to East Shaftesbury about five miles south of Grimshaw. A year and a half later Violet Harrison and I got married. (I must have been impressed after all.)

A few particular incidents remain in my mind:

One winter morning I got to school at 7:30 in the morning. That was on the way back from a dance at Crystal Creek.

A parent (the only really irate one I ever faced) came in one day before school to really bawl me out for the things I was teaching his children. He was strongly opposed to my lessons about the earth being round and he insisted that any fool could see that it must be flat.



Back drop for play by young people — Director, Charles Cromie.

The young people and I put on a play (something about "Pumpkin Ridge"). We had a lot of fun and such doing it, but it was a very unpolished slap-dash production.

Violet and I lived in Peace River, Carstairs, Wainwright and Stoney Plain for five years in each place. I started teaching Industrial Arts in Peace River and ended up teaching it in Salisbury High School, Sherwood Park, for the last 14 years until I retired in 1973. Violet died of cancer after a long illness, July, 1974.

We had four children, two boys and two girls. Terrill (the third one) was killed in a car accident in 1961. The other three are all teachers. Raymond is a vice-principal in Sherwood Park, Rose Marie teaches Grade 1 in Sherwood Park, Dianne teaches Remedial grades 1-6 in Lamont. I have six grandchildren.

ANNIE MAY DONALDSON AND ROBERTA DAVID DONALDSON

Annie was born in Coweta Oklahoma in 1905. Roberta was born in Port Elizabeth, South Africa in 1904. Roberta came to the Peace River country about the time the Peace River bridge was being built as his step-father Mr. Burt Bickerton homesteaded seven miles south of Bluesky. When coming of age Roberta homesteaded south of Griffen Creek district. He met Annie a couple of years later at a district picnic and many love letters were exchanged so they had planned to be married June, 1926 in McLennan, Alberta. Then they went to start their life as farmers. A short time went by and they started raising their family of six. World War II began and they sold the homestead to Mr. Duncan McKenzie and moved the family to Edmonton.

Roberta and Annie just could never forget the Peace River country so after the war was over Roberta and Annie moved the family to Grande Prairie buying a farm 2½ miles north and 2½ miles east of Grande Prairie with the V.L.A. in 1945.

The six children from oldest to youngest were: Esther born February 6, 1927, John born December 16, 1929, Carl born February 5, 1930, Norah born September 20, 1931, Roy born February 5, 1934, and Violet born May 5, 1935.

Esther married Glee Collier raising five children — Robert, Barbara, Gary, Karen and Donald. John married Viotet Renus and raised four children — Dale, Dianne, Terry and Kenny. Carl married Winnifred Clarke and raised three children — Steven, Larry and Cheryl. Norah married Less Hiltz and raised three children — Ronald, Carla and Leeann. Roy married Anna May Rogers and raised five children — Sheron, Troy, Timothy, David and Michael. Violet married Henry Routier and raised two children — Shirley and Dwayne.

Roberta Donaldson passed away after a long illness in November, 1964 at Grande Prairie. Annie lived on the farm until she passed away suddenly October 27, 1970 in the Edmonton Royal Alex Hospital.

HOWARD DIXON

Howard Dixon bought S.W. 12-72-5-W6 in 1923, previous owners were Shorty Ward and Mrs. Mary

McDonald. Howard rented the land out until 1934 when he married Lilian Westfield from Saskatchewan.

The family includes Donald of Grande Prairie and Robert of Ft. McMurray, Alberta. Robert is married to Sharon Kalmbach of Grande Prairie and they have two daughters.

Donald and Robert attended Crystal Creek School until it was closed down then they were bussed into Grande Prairie to finish their education.

We used to haul drinking water from a dug well on John Blonke's farm for a while, then finally from Robert Cochranes and Grande Prairie before drilling a well on the home place.

Our home was heated with mainly wood and coal at night. For light we used the old coal oil lamps and gas lamps. We travelled to town with team and sleigh or Bennett wagon. For entertainment we enjoyed the radio.

We had very good neighbors — such as the Fred Boyds, Gus Swansons, Roy Wheelers and Mrs. Leah Hays just to name a few.

TONY AND FRANCES DOLL

I was born and raised in the Waterhole area the year of 1918 when all infants of that particular year were presented with a camera. Incidently the camera still works. My parents Katie (Frank) and Frank Doll were hard working people. Being homesteaders they had no choice. Naturally a lot of the farm chores were soon part of our life too. There wasn't a school at Waterhole, so we soon moved to another farm near the Red Star School district. Myself being the oldest I had to take the lead, more-so when father was very sick, that year I missed all of 100 days of school. During the busy season spring and fall, I had to be the runner. Trot off for school realy early because I had five miles to go across the fields plowed or seeded, through small brush, over shallow ditches with water (didn't matter being barefooted), then after school I had to walk two miles homes and pick up the grub bag mother had prepared, it consisted of a syrup pail of milk, some eggs and bread and away I'd go because there were still three more miles to go to Waterhole where father was working the land. I didn't finish elementary school, since I had to stay home altogether and help farming. As years passed on my brothers were growing up and they too had to help. We grubbed a lot of bush with grub-axes and horses; that was the way farmers cleared land. As time went on we got our first tractor, then one of us could go out working for other farmers to make some money. After us six boys, there were two girls. The folks would always take the girls with them when they'd go visiting. That's when our farm yard would turn into a "Little Rodeo". Several neighbour boys came walking to our place, and it wasn't long when the idea was brought up — to rope calves and ride them. Before long they were bawlin, tired calves and limping, dirty boys. Often wonder what line they gave at home.



Three little Dolls.

Then there was a time when we made ice cream. I can well say there were a few freezers made, mother never knew about. We couldn't take in any sports at school, father wouldn't even consider a free show — especially when there was a big pile of wood to split, or you could be cutting ice blocks and stack and store sawdustless in a double walled, insulated ice house. There was always something to do.

We spent two weeks hauling out firewood, and then go for rails and posts too. Our two teams left home by 6 A.M. and travelled 9-12 miles, the logs were cut and skidded, loaded, (stopped for a lunch of frozen sandwiches), sometimes we'd cook coffee, and then we'd prepare the sleighs for home. There was many a time we walked miles behind the load just to keep warm. Once we had that finished then we'd get the man and his outfit down to saw up the logs into blocks, that was a big days work. With the extra help it became a fun thing. Usually seven or eight men could keep the saw going. Then you'd have feed to haul, grind some oats, haul the grain by team and sleigh to the elevator.

My Uncle Johnny and I used to be the merry makers for little country school dances; just a violin and a guitar, but we had fun doing it and the crowd must have liked the little we did because they'd have us back.

Our swimming place was always the first pond along the road when the idea hit us. Once we were swimming at our Uncle's place, never remembered about his bull that was with the cows. When that animal came over the hill, there were several little white streaks running across the road to the other field. Lucky for us we just hid and an old Model T came up the road. We sure laugh about that incident, but it wasn't so funny at the time.

Years roll by and the next thing (1939) the news media had to tell us that our country was at war. In 1940 a group of us boys were called up for military training in Grande Prairie. It was only for two months. Then in 1941 we were all called back again for another two months of basic training. There were a number of us that joined up after that. Needless to say my mother was disappointed to think that I'd enlist. I soon explained to the folks that there were four of us boys that were of age to go and since I was the oldest it might as well be me. We were all sent home for Christmas leave, then in '42 we were recruited and sent to Red



Tony and Francis Doll and family of 1976.

Deer for two months of advanced training. On March 5, 1942 we boarded the train. We were all off for active duty. We went as far as Halifax, then we got on the boat and it took us a week to get across to Scotland. From there we boarded another train to England, we landed at Farmburrow.

About the 20th of June, I was with the first ammunition corps, hauling ammunition to different outfits. We were on stand for 72 hours during the "Dieppe Raid." After that raid we were still hauling ammunition on exercise.

We soon had to take another course. I took driver mechanics for two months. From here we went back to the First Corps then on to the 85th Bridge Corp as a driver mechanic. We kept on training until the second front opened which was June, 1943.

On July 5th the great moment had come — all the soldiers were uneasy and excited, wondering what it was going to be like. That night we saw action on enemy soil for the first time. "Jerry" (as we called the enemy) came down and dropped flares, and we could see the flashes of our guns way beyond. It gives you many thoughts, it reminded you of firecrackers on a special day, but you can rest assured the results were not quite the same. We were at Pierrepont on July 13th and a few days later we moved up to St. contest. This was the first experience any of the men had of being under shell fire. It was close and hot and this was where we had our first casualty.

By August 18th we had put many miles behind us until we got to Falaise. Here the big push was on. Day after day we moved to new locations. A week later the platoon was at Brionne where the platoon got lucky and found a "Jerry" car. All the equipment had to be turned in, we hurriedly sold the car for five bottles of Calvados and three chickens. We had a good chicken dinner and a small chaser of Calvados, what a treat!

It was on May 8th, 1945 that the platoon heard the good news. All the fighting had stopped. We were all so relieved that we celebrated with a cup of tea.

Back to our home and native land — Canada. We arrived in Halifax October 5th. I got home October 14th just two weeks before my cousin's wedding. He had me join the wedding party as honored bestman.

Thirty days after I got back from overseas active duty I was sent to Calgary for my discharge. The next step was to find some land. I managed to get a quarter section about two miles from my other land. That's the quarter I bought through the V.L.A. All farm boys were sent to Red Deer for a months course on farming methods. They stressed dairy and eggs.

Two years later I married our neighbour's daughter, Frances Heck, October 28, 1947. No one could change my mind, thinking our Canadian girls were still the best!

My parents Marieva (Obenlock) and Martin Heck registered me, Frances at the Waterhole townsite in 1923. Our home place was in the Red Star School District on rented land. My parents used to do janitor work in the school as we grew up it soon changed, we'd do the sweeping — for 10c a night and later we took over the job of lighting fires. That would give us about

$5.00 a month. It was pretty good money in those days. Being the oldest girl I had to help with household chores and watching out for the little children. We were a family of fourteen, eleven are still living.

By the time I was nine years old, my mother had taught me how to make bread dough. They weren't small batches, usually 18-20 loaves at a time. I got to be quite the baker and so found I had that job oftener than I liked. Lucky for us we could run home for lunch — there wasn't much to make lunches with in 1928 but you could always have a hot bowl of soup or pancakes and tea. I remember distinctly how poor Santa was — we each got a scribbler and pencil. Mother told us that it was a bad year and Santa had so many that by the time he got to our place he had almost finished his night. We accepted it but when we went to school and heard what other kids got, it caused us mixed feelings. In 1933 Christmas proved itself, we got dolls and mouth organs.

Our school picnics were just super to us kids. We had homemade ice cream, free lemonade — and the races and ball games were alot of fun, and the lunches were something else. We knew it was a picnic.

My folks didn't think it wise for me to work in town so I worked for several farm homes, until the war broke out and so many local boys were called up. I hired out as a stooker, and followed as a teamster on the threshing outfit. They gave me a team and a bundle rack and promised me $5.00 a day. That sounded better then housework for $2.00 a day. The first year I put in twenty-one days, the second year I put in thirteen days and the third year only eight days. By this time quite a few farmers had gotten combines.

I had made up my mind if my brother went overseas I'd join the services too. He never did and so I didn't either.

In the mean time I worked as a store clerk for awhile, later I decided to join my sister at High Prairie to work in the hospital. Here too, you could tell help was short. Some of the school teachers would help out on weekends. The nursing sisters and nurses were very busy.

Then in 1945 peace was declared and the boys were coming home. The day we got word Sister Superior was ringing a small bell all along the corridors and letting everyone know the good news. By the end of November, I went back to Fairview and worked in the Municipal Hospital there.

We were married October 28, 1947 at 10:30 A.M. in the St. Boniface Church at Friendstal. Those days when a couple got married it was the custom to get married in the morning and they had dinner and supper at one of the homes. In our case with many relatives, we rented the community hall. There was music so the people could dance from 2 till 4 and then after supper again.

That winter Tony worked at a saw mill so he could get the lumber he needed for our first home to be built on the V.L.A. quarter.

Our home wasn't completely finished but November 17, 1948 we moved in. It was heated with an air tight heater and five years later we had a furnace put in. We had gas mantle lamps. My A-1 washer was a square tub and a scrub board with lye soap and lots of elbow grease. By January 15th there were three of us in our comfy home.

Our transportation was the Massey 30 tractor with a cab on it. I sat on the seat with the baby and Tony drove standing beside us.

We soon had chores to do as our parents gave us each a cow. Then we bought a couple of pigs to use up the extra milk. By this time we had an ice fridge to keep food and milk fresh, but before that I used to put the milk in a milk can and hang it down into the well — the cold water kept the milk from going sour for a couple of days.

Our children were growing in number and in size too. The boys were soon able to do little jobs that would save our time and steps. On weekends when I had to deliver two or three roasting birds and take the 6-8 pounds of butter to town they all pitched in.

In 1953 we were in the Grande Prairie area looking for land in several areas. We were sent out to look at the Marek farm but it wasn't what we were wanting. A few years later we were sent to Hythe — east and south that wasn't to our liking either.

By 1959 we got the urge to again look for land. This time Tony left early one morning in late March, it was our last try. One thing he had to make sure of was a house and a bus route as we had four school students by this time. He came back that night and felt he had found what he wanted. The deal was made and Tony and my brother, David, came over to put in the crop. A few days later my mother came along to help me put in a garden. On June 25, 1959 we moved over to the Twilight area. Tony's brothers, neighbors, and friends all helped us move all our belongings. This farm, S. 3-72-5-S.W6, had belonged to Bruce Rome. We later heard the Maile's had one time lived in the house that still stands by the creek.

By 1961 we had our nine children so we built a new house, the basement was dug October 28, 1966 and by January 6th we moved once more this time not very far. Needless to say we enjoy the comforts and space and still do. Tony was soon doing work for Equipment



Bernice, Mary, Marilyn and Charles Doll and their 4-H calves — 1968.

(farm) setting up machinery. He has worked for Wapiti Sand and Gravel, Cockshutt Equipment and then to the Plywood (N.C.F.I.) and has been there for over nine years.

The boys were getting older and soon wanted to get involved in community activities. In 1961 Charles joined the Grande Prairie 4H Beef Club then the following year James joined too. Mr. Sheehan, Jim Melvin and Alex Lawrence were their leaders. The twins, Mary and Marilyn were in the sewing club but decided they'd like the Beef projects better. In the mean time Bernice was the right age and she too joined the sewing club. They all became members of the Beef Club. By this time Neil Moon was their leader. We didn't only have club competition it was family competition because some years there were four in the club from our family. As years went on Bill, Ben and Elaine all had 3-4 years in the Beef Club — this year we just have David on his third year.

The years of 1972 made more changes in our family. Mary married Marvin Hanson, August 20, 1972. Marilyn married John Hawryluk, August 20, 1972. Then we celebrated our 25th anniversary on October 28, 1972. James married Dorthy Lange, July 20, 1973, Bernice married Grant LaValley October 6, 1973, Bill married Janet Bulford, March 30, 1974 and Charles married Eunice Robideau, June 29, 1974. They all completed their high school at the "Vocational" and later Composite High School in Grande Prairie. Ben will have completed his this June (1977). Another six years hopefully will see Elaine and David through their high school. We now have seven granddaughters and one grandson, all living near here.

We are grateful to our family, with all their help and understanding. We've enjoyed our togetherness and look back to the years when they and we were younger.

JAMES ALLAN DRYSDALE

James Allan Drysdale, eldest son of Sidney and Anna Drysdale, was born at Clover Bar, moved with his parents in 1928 to a farm north east of Clairmont. In 1945, after serving in the R.C.A.F. he bought a half-section four miles north of Grande Prairie and in June, 1946 he and Alice McCaig, a Clairmont school teacher from Waskatenau, were married.

Eleven years later both the house and farm were too small so Allan sold that and bought the Schaublin section, originally the Marek homestead, two miles east of the four mile corner. Sherrill, Sheila and Donald were thrilled to have individual bedrooms and could hardly wait for night to come, but when mother and dad went upstairs that first night all three were sound asleep in one bed. Another daughter, Adell, was born in 1959.

The mile north to the highway was a problem for many years and Allan was often called to help someone out of the mud. One unforgettable time was of a bride and groom who spent the night there. Allan's tractors happened to be in a nearby field and the couple had one of them stuck too.

In 1964 Allan built a large hog barn and for the next nine years he and the three boys were busy. Two nephews, John and Brian Drysdale, came to live with us that fall after the death of their mother. At the present time Allan is a grain farmer and rents five more quarters of land.

Allan, Alice and their children have been active in community affairs — County Council, Agricultural Society, 4-H and Clairmont United Church. Alice taught occasionally when there was a shortage of teachers.

Sherrill married Harry Southern, R.C.M.P. and lives in Ottawa, Sheila married Paul Listoe, accountant, and lives in Grande Prairie. Donald and his wife, Elaine Ferbey, are both practising law in Vancouver. Adell is in Grade XI at the Composite High School. John is living in Vancouver and Brian, who married Sharon Winter, works for Acklands in Grande Prairie.

MRS. SHADA ANN DUNBAR — March 10, 1977

Mr. Herman Dunbar, whom I married December 13, 1905, brought me and our family from Garwin, Iowa to Vulcan, Alberta, in July, 1917. The family consisted of Olive, born 1907; Freeda, born 1909; Doyle, born 1911; and the twins Marvel and Marie, born 1916.

We had lived in southern Alberta for thirteen years at the time we made the move to the Peace River country in 1930. My husband farmed just south of Vulcan at Kirkaldy, where in 1920 we had the heaviest crop we have ever experienced. The two older daughters were married at Kirkaldy: Olive to Mr. Eugene Kuykendall (a West Virginian) on December 13, 1927; Freeda to Mr. Bert Maisey of the Vulcan district, on December 13, 1928.

Olive and Gene having come to the Grande Prairie district in the spring of 1928, my husband and I decided to follow them to the Peace River country after having made an "exploratory" trip in the summer of that year. The memory of that trip, which was made in a Model T Ford, is still very vivid. The road, which in those days took the Slave Lake route, was in dreadful shape, there being no gravel at any point. Due to heavy rains, part of it had been corduroyed and all of it was axle deep in mud. At one point we were able to make only 35 miles in a seven hour period. At another we were forced to follow the railroad, bumping along on the ties in order to by-pass a particularly bad section. Teams of horses had been stationed at certain points by the government in order to help travellers like ourselves out of the mud. I remember spending a night at Moody's crossing, because the ferry did not operate at night.

Our first view of the Grande Prairie district, after crossing the Smoky River, was impressive enough for us to decide that this was where we wanted to move, which we did in March, 1930.

We were on the Mervin Kehr farm, four miles north of Grande Prairie, for the first year. Mr. Kehr had bought the farm the previous year and wanted us to take care of it until he could himself move from Vulcan. We lived on the O. B. Harris farm, northwest of Grande Prairie, for the next four years while my husband farmed rented land in that area. The twins attended Percy school while we lived here. We then rented the Hugh Ferguson farm (the Ferguson were Edson Trail pioneers) and lived west of town for the next 16 years, from 1935 to 1950.

Marie attended the Peace River Bible Institute, Sexsmith, for two years during this time. Doyle having previously attended the Alberta Bible College for a year, Marie and Marvel accompanied him to Lethbridge to enroll there. The twins graduated from the school in 1941 and Marvel was married that same year to Marie Gonyea, a fellow-student. Marie was married in 1942 to Frank Rempel, a student who had also come from Grande Prairie. Both of the twins have continued in the ministry: Marvel having held lengthy pastorates in Prince Edward Island, Tacoma, Washington, and in Ceres, California. Marie and Frank chose to go to India as missionaries in 1949, where they served until 1969. They are now working and teaching in Nairobi, Kenya.

In 1950, my husband and I bought the Paknoski farm, five miles north and four miles east of Grande Prairie. In order for us to be able to live close to the highway, our son-in-law, Mr. Kuykendall allowed us to live in a small house on his land which adjoined our farm.

Our son Doyle married Jean Enman of Charlottetown, P.E.I. on November 12, 1949, having served as an airman during World War II. Doyle bought the Maile farm under the Veterans Land Administration which he subsequently sold and moved to Seattle, Washington where they now reside.

My husband Herman passed away on February 29, 1956. His death occurred two months after we had been married for fifty years. We had celebrated that event in the previous June because Marie was home then on furlough from India and had to return before the actual date of the anniversary which was December 13, 1955. Following his death I rented the farm to my grandson, Lyle Kuykendall and lived for the next sixteen years with my daughter Olive. The land was later sold to Lyle.

Olive, my eldest daughter, passed away on January 14, 1972, and is buried in the Grande Prairie cemetery along with her father. I then moved to the Pioneer Lodge in Grande Prairie in February, 1972, where I still reside.

I feel very contented to live here and am grateful for the care I am receiving and for the privileges that are granted to the residents of the Lodge.

Although I have missed my husband very much, life has not been uninteresting in the years following his death. I have been able to be active in the Church of Christ in Grande Prairie, of which I and my husband were charter members, and where I have served as a deaconess for thirty-two years. My faith has meant everything to me. In 1961, when I was 73 years of age, I accompanied my son-in-law, Frank Rempel, to India to visit him and Marie and their sons, Dale and Dean who were living in the great northern city of Kanpur, in the United Province, for nine months. It was an exciting round-the-world trip which included, going and coming, stops in London, Paris, Rome, Athens, Cairo, Jerusalem, Beirut, Hong Kong and Hawaii. The highlight in India was a trip to the Vale of Kashmir where for two weeks we lived on a house boat on the River Jhelum.

In 1967 I went with Olive and Gene to see the World's Fair in Montreal.

On a visit to see my son Doyle in Seattle in 1971 I fell and broke a hip. The result of this has been to curtail my travels somewhat, though not entirely. I have been able since to visit relatives in Iowa, Seattle, and California.

At the time of writing I have just finished celebrating my 89th birthday, in doing which I was helped by many friends and relatives. The party took place at my daughter Marie's, who is at present home on furlough from their work in Kenya, in East Africa.

We have never regretted moving to the Peace River country, where we have had a good life, shared by a great host of dear friends.

MURRAY AND SHEILA FAUL

Murray and Sheila Faul arrived in the Peace River country from Humboldt, Saskatchewan in the fall of 1962. Having been married in July of that year, tales of the Peace Country lured them from their home farming area, resulting in the purchase of a farm near Grande Prairie in the early spring of 1963. The home quarter (N.W. 7-72-5-6) is adjacent to Highway 34.

There were four children born into the family. Bryan is 5, the youngest, and in kindergarten. Wanda is 8 years old and in grade 3 at St. Gerards. Keith is 11 years old and is in grade 6 at Holy Cross School. Bradley who would now be 13 and was a model student passed away suddenly on January 14, 1975. He is very sadly missed by his parents, brothers and sister and may "God's Light shine upon him forever."

Farming in the Grande Prairie area proved to be quite a challenge, not having proper equipment or tools to start out with. Very fortunately for us we settled in one of the finest neighborhoods, unknown to us at the time, as we often had to rely on our neighbors for items and know-how we did not have at the time. Since, however, things have improved fairly well and the grain farming operation has shown a profit at times.

The usual crops are growing wheat, barley and rapeseed, and with the use of a grain dryer, a crop has never been left out or lost. Grande Prairie seems very much like home to us now and we are always happy to return whenever we have occasion to visit our parents and place of birth.

We are looking to the future and are thankful for the neighbors and friends we have acquired since coming to the "Land of the Mighty Peace."

ALEX FISHER AND FAMILY — by Mrs. Erma Schroeder

Alex Fisher and family moved to the Peace River Country around 1927 and lived east of Grande Prairie. They purchased the land from Mr. Headly Johnson. The family consisted of Alex, his wife, Esther and son, Marion — who played hockey around the country and a daughter, Alice "Fisher" Mellott. Esther passed away in 1934 or 1935 and is buried in Grande Prairie. Alex and Marion moved to Eaglesham and farmed. Alex passed away in 1953 and is also buried in Grande Prairie. Alice "Fisher" Mellott passed away in Dawson Creek, B.C. in 1963 leaving her husband, Steve, and son, Gerald. Alice was buried in Dawson Creek. Marion lived in Eaglesham until his death in 1974. He passed away in Red Deer, Alberta while visiting my

brother, Cecil Swanson. Marion was on his way back to Eaglesham after spending some time in Nanton where he had visited some relatives. Marion Fisher was buried in Eaglesham.

FRANK AND FLORENCE KNOX

Frank and Florence Knox came to Crooked Creek from Saskatchewan. After 13 years on a homestead there they decided to come to the Twilight district. They rented a section of land from B. D. Patterson and farmed for two summers. This was the year of 1943 and 1944.

There were five children of which four went to school at Twilight. Freda, Jeanne, Ray and Irvin — Shirley didn't start school until the family moved into Grande Prairie in September of 1944.

Most of the entertainments were dances in the school — and at Five Mile School. There were school picnics in the summer.

We didn't have any organized clubs or groups but I remember going to the Mareks one time to make a quilt.

The whole family enjoyed those years and liked the people in the community.

EUGENE R. KUYKENDALL

My wife Olive and I and two children, Lyle and Grace moved on to the Elmer Kline farm in the spring of 1938. Our move was from the East Bear Lake country in 1928.

In the spring of 1940 we rented additional land owned by C. C. Raison. In the fall of 1943 we bought the whole Raison farm, and in the spring moved into the frame house on the east half of section 16-72-5-W. 6th, which had been built by the original owner Dr. Sproule. Mr. and Mrs. Raison had owned this land, and lived in this house for 22 years before selling it to us. Failing health made it necessary for them to do so.

Dr. Sproule had obtained the land originally through African Scrips, which he later sold to the Raisons. It consisted of the east half 16-72-5-W. 6th, and the west half, 18-72-5-W. 6th.

On moving into this community we found ourselves among people, the majority of whom were original settlers, and all of whom were wonderful neighbours.

Over the ensuing years we endeavoured to improve our living facilities, and over a period of time managed to bring quite a few additional acres of the arable land under cultivation. In 1949 we built a new house and moved some of the other buildings on to the S.W. quarter of 15-72-5-W6th, next to the Provincial Highway No. 34. We moved into the new house in 1950, and have resided there till this present time.

Grace was married in 1958 to Ronald Dakin, an Edmonton young man, whom she had met as a fellow student in the Alberta Bible College, Calgary, and left the "nest". Lyle decided he had found the "right one" and he and Sharon Turner were married in 1960. Sharon is the daughter of Dave and Mildred Turner. Dave had been born on the Edson Trail when his parents were on their way to the Kleskun Hill Settlement.

I have fond memories of the past years, some of which were not easy experiences at the time but are in retrospect tremendous to recall.

I had the privilege of serving on the Grande Prairie Hospital Board for a number of years prior to the forming of the Grande Prairie County. I was also Cattle Convenor for the Grande Prairie County Fair for three years in the early period of its re-establishment. For a number of years I served as R.O. for the County. We had the privilege of being charter members in the establishment of a congregation of the Church of Christ in Grande Prairie in 1945.

My wife, Olive, passed away as the result of a malignant brain tumor in January, 1972 ending a wonderful husband and wife relationship which had continued over a period of 43 years. Olive had been the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Dunbar, who had also moved to the Peace River country in 1930.

In 1973 I found another lady with whom to share the remaining years of my life. Anna Neufeld and I were married April 21, 1973, and continue to live on the home place, except for winter intervals which we try to spend in a warmer, more snow-free area.

In very recent years I sold the east half of 16-72-5 to three different families who have all built fine homes and are a valuable addition to our community. This leaves us with the home half section; one quarter of which I rent to Lyle as it adjoins some of his other land.

One of our very early experiences in the Grande Prairie district which I recall may be of interest, especially to our grandchildren. We brought a railroad boxcar of "settlers effects" to Grande Prairie, which included six head of horses, pigs, turkeys, machinery, household furniture, and a supply of vegetables. It was —30 degrees Fahrenheit, and as clear as could be, when we got into Grande Prairie on the 12th of March, 1928. There were about three feet of snow on the ground. We had shipped from Vulcan in southern Alberta where the snow had already gone and we had only a wagon with which to move our stuff, including the perishable vegetables.

I had heard that as long as one kept vegetables well covered and on the move, the jiggling and bouncing would keep them from freezing. We eventually got our car unloaded and the perishables onto the wagon about five o'clock in the afternoon and started the nine mile trip. It went quite well for the first five miles where there was a car track for the wagon, but the remaining four miles had only a sleigh track and we had to break trail. To shorten a long story, we finally got about two and a half miles on this leg of the journey by nine o'clock and the team pulling the wagon was exhausted. Fortunately we had arrived at a farm where there was a big barn full of livestock. The folks were good enough to allow me to pull wagon and its contents into the barn, where it was warm enough to keep things from freezing more than they already had.

Next day we were able to borrow a sleigh and loaded the contents of the wagon onto a more appropriate vehicle. Thus we moved the remaining distance, and on arriving at our destination piled the vegetables in the middle of the kitchen floor. You can imagine what happened when they got warmed up. There was juice running to the four corners of the room even though only about half of them were frozen.

Two days later Olive came in on the passenger

train. To say the least I was a bit apprehensive about what her reaction would be when she walked into her new home (we had been married only three months) I don't know to this day whether her mouth flew open, but I know her eyes popped, when she saw that mess. However, she stayed, and three weeks later after we had cleaned things up, and got curtains up in this former bachelor shack, the bachelor came back for a visit. I know his mouth flew open and he blurted out, "what a woman can do!"

Not long after this same bachelor made a trip to England by boat. On board ship he met a lady whom he subsequently married, so I guess he was really convinced of the value of a wife. For my part, I knew for sure I had chosen the right girl to be my wife.

As I walked up the street to get some breakfast, the morning I arrived in Grande Prairie, Patty (P. V.) Croken was out sweeping the sidewalk in the front of his store. He greeted me and we struck up a cordial conversation which led to an invitation to come and shop in his store. This I was happy to do for he was willing to give us credit and our finances were getting very low. In fact, by the time we were settled we were completely out of cash. My friend, Mr. Jim Donaldson had agreed to back my note at the bank, (we were renting his farm) he was in California and it took a great deal of time to get things arranged so we could have funds available. I am still very thankful to Patty Croken for the generosity extended to us then and in the depression years of the early thirties. He was so patient with our slow repayment.

LYLE E. KUYKENDALL

Lyle was born in Grande Prairie July 12th, 1932. His first few years were spent living on rented farms with his folks and they settled on the Raison farm in 1943.

School began in Clairmont and when they moved to the Raison farm he went to school at Twilight, in 1944. Grades eight and nine were taken by correspondence at the school with Shirley Colton (Chugg) as supervisor. Lyle and his sister, Grace, caught rides to school with the Wendts or Jim Oatway by horse. Occasionally Bill Wendt and Lyle would ride behind the horses on skis. Often in the summer time Lyle and Grace would ride their bikes to school. Completed grades ten to twelve at the high school in Grande Prairie, Lyle started driving school bus during his last year in school, 1950.

The first bus was a Thames half-ton panel with homemade seats. The Wendt children; Carol, Helen, Bob, Neil and Doug, Grace, Jean Carveth, and two Wiebe children were the first students to ride the bus. During March of 1951 Lyle recalls getting caught in a blizzard just east of the railroad tracks. All of the kids on the bus walked back to Kehr's to stay the night, waiting out the storm. After having driven the bus for 26 years there are many memories to recount. An often asked question of a grade one child was, "do your folks fight as much as they used to?" This would bring a wide variety of answers — usually quite hilarious! Some "second generation" kids were riding the bus, for example the Binks children, as their Dad, Robert, rode the bus during his school days.

Lyle contracted the Mail Route for route number one, east of Grande Prairie in 1951 and delivered mail in that area for about 20 years.

Lyle started farming Grandpa Dunbar's half section in 1956, renting the land until 1975 when we bought it from Grandma Dunbar. We took over the lease from Gene Kuykendall on our home quarter in 1965 and were able to take out a homestead lease as we did not hold title to land at that time.

Sharon was born in Grande Prairie, April 30, 1943 to Dave and Mildred Turner. I first met Lyle at about six years of age in Sunday School at the Central Church of Christ. We were friends for quite some time before becoming "more than friends." We had quite a time — with lots of help from some of the boys riding Lyle's bus — especially Neil and Doug Wendt and Bob Dixon, all of whom I went to high school with. Lyle always has firsthand report of my activities, real or sometimes improved upon, from these fellows. Finally on September 30, 1960 we were married with my brother Lee Turner, Ron Friesen, Delrose Maile and Gwen Tink standing up with us.

One of my first experiences in this community was the "shivaree" held in our first home. Later the same evening I was a bit ruffled when I went into the bedroom to find Alberta McKeeman peering under the bed! I thought she was looking at the dust, then she quickly explained she was looking for one of the boys caps. We were living in the Dunbars last home, just west of Gene Kuykendall's present home.

Our first baby, Russell Edson, was born September 4, 1962. Our only daughter was born March 26, 1964. Allen, our centennial project was born September 22, 1967. Ian was born May 26, 1971 and our youngest, Kurt was born December 5, 1974.

We built our present home in 1966-1967 with Mickey Arac as our carpenter and Lyle and his Dad as helpers. We moved in our finished home November 14, 1967. We have enjoyed the space immensely, needless to say with our family we've needed it.

We all have our "pet activities." Russell and Anne are involved in music study. Allen loves the outdoors and going over to Bacons. Ian seems to be our "farm boy," and Kurt manages to keep all in an uproar! I spend many hours sewing and have taken up leather work, including jackets and moccasins. Lyle just seems to keep busy keeping everything running smoothly. Lyle has especially enjoyed this last year, he has been able to take in short trips, sales, etc., since he is not tied to driving bus. This is something he has never done. We all enjoy the fellowship with fellow Christians at the Avondale Church of Christ. This is where we spend many of our spare hours, in worship and fun time.

May I add that our years in this community have "— been good." The neighbors are terrific, none better to be found!

JOSEPH HENRY HARRISON (1878-1955)

Joseph Harrison or Joe as he was better known, was born March 7, 1878 at Orangeville, Ontario. This is where he spent his early years. In 1869 he migrated west to Ft. Saskatchewan, Alberta with his parents and brother Ronald. By the time he was twenty, Joe was working in saw mills and lumber camps at Golden

and Revelstoke, B.C., to save enough money to return to Chipman, Alberta where he homesteaded and in 1907 married Christina (Tina) Sipe. There were seven children from this union before Tina's death on June 25, 1928. She was predeceased by one son Orville.

Late in that year, Joe went to the Grande Prairie area to look for cheaper land, having already sold his farm at Chipman. Arriving at Clairmont, Joe discovered land for sale near Jack Oatway, a friend and co-worker of lumbering days in B.C. After some searching he finally decided on that land; the E.½ 8-72-5-6, and the W.½ 9-72-5-6. The family consisting of four sons Lloyd, Raymond, Bertram, and James and two daughters, Violet and Mary moved to their new farm on April 1, 1929. Bert and Mary who were in school at the time began attending Kleskun Lake School, to swell the attendance there, to probably its greatest in history.

When Twilight School opened in January, 1930, Mary and Bert began classes there, joined by older sister Violet and brother Jimmy, the youngest member of the family. A young bachelor teacher Charles Cromie, was the first teacher at Twilight. Violet fell in love with Charlie and they were married some years later.

After having a number of unsatisfactory housekeepers, Mrs. Eunice Davies, a widow and long time friend from Chipman, joined the family to assist in raising the children and doing the household chores. Being a kindly, genial woman, she was loved by everyone in the area and a great asset to the Twilight community. She remained with the family until the farm was sold.

Joe specialized in dairy cows and chickens; selling cream and eggs twice weekly in Grande Prairie at restaurants and stores. Sometimes during the depression years this produce had to be exchanged for groceries at the stores where he sold eggs. This practice did not fatten his pocket book but it did increase the larder; often with foods that would not have been purchased had cash been involved. The shelf in the outer kitchen, lined with cans of unheard of and never-before-tasted jams was the envy of all the neighbour kids. It was a thrill indeed to have tea (a specialty of Mrs. Davies' because of her Welsh background) and toast and those delectable jams, at any of the three daily tea-times at Harrisons.

Joe Harrison's trade mark was a brown felt hat; with the crown dented as is a policeman's hat. He wore this hat always when he went to town and the same hat sufficied all those years in the Twilight district. The hat was complemented in winter with a horse hide coat with a high collar. His Irish humor was displayed in winter; when he sighted friends on the street on a bitter cold day. He would open his coat, turn down the collar and complain about the heat.

In winter, cream and eggs were delivered with a covered caboose on sleighs, powered by a frisky team of driving horses. In summer deliveries were proudly made with a black and shiny 1927 Model T Ford car of which he was the sole driver. That car, with Joe in brown felt hat, proudly at the wheel and Mrs. Davies, prim and proper in her best coat and hat beside him, was an unforgettable neighborhood sight.

The war took Bert to the Army and Raymond to the Navy and in 1943 Lloyd left home to work in the Grande Prairie hospital. Jim became an aircraft mechanic with C.P.A. after graduation from high school. In 1944 Joe sold the farm to Veteran's Land Act and retired to Edmonton and later to Ft. Saskatchewan where he died in July, 1955.

After the farm sale Mrs. Davies went to North Battleford, Saskatchewan to visit her son Bill before returning to Edmonton. She died there unexpectedly in 1945.

JOSEPH HENRY HARRISON FAMILY —

Lloyd Harrison — October 5, 1909

Born at Chipman, Alberta and educated there. Helped farm in the Twilight district from 1929-1943. He became a section-man for the N.A.R. and later became foreman. Lloyd lived at Demmitt, Woking, Kenzie, Waterways and Gundy. Quit the N.A.R. in 1968 to operate a billiard hall at Chetwynd, B.C. Married Madelan Foust of Demmitt, July 12, 1943 and they had four sons — Ronald Allan, September 15, 1944 and married Annette Malboues at Thompson, Manitoba and they have four children. Orville Dale born March 4, 1946 and married Karen Chrenek and they have children and live in Grande Prairie. Douglas Wayne born November 2, 1947 married Bernadette Dee Broulle and they live in Edmonton and have one child. Brian Lloyd born April 25, 1955 married Patricia Disher and they have two children and live at Chetwynd, B.C.

Lloyd and Madelan have retired and live in Hythe.

VIOLET Harrison — November 11, 1911

Born at Chipman, Alberta and educated there and at Twilight school and the Grande Prairie High School. Married Charles Cromie, her former teacher. Lived at Peace River, Carstairs, Wainwright, Stony Plain and finally in Edmonton where she died in July, 1974. Violet and Charles had four children: Rose Marie, married Frank Lo Cicero they have four children and live and teach in Sherwood Park. Raymond Charles married Eleanor Nix, they have four children and they live and teach in Edmonton. Terril, deceased. Diane lives and teaches in Lamont, Alberta.

Raymond Harrison — August 3, 1914

Born at Chipman, Alberta educated there. Married Eleanor Oatway. Farmed at Bear Lake after being discharged from the Navy and five years construction with the C.N.R. They had four children. Erin Eleanor, born October 9, 1951 and deceased. Murray Raymond born November 10, 1952. Patricia Ann born January 27, 1954 and Colleen Susan born August 14, 1957. The family resides in Grande Prairie since Raymond's death, September 30, 1973.

Bertram Roderick Harrison — August 11, 1917

Born at Chipman, educated there and at Twilight, Grande Prairie and attended Normal School in Edmonton to become a teacher. Married Faye Erno of Teepee Creek where he taught most of his teaching years before his untimely death in June, 1959. Faye and Bert had three children and are living in Sexsmith. Betty Sandra, married Wayne Johnson and is living in

Grande Prairie with one son. Patricia Fay married Grant Badger and is living in Sexsmith.

Mary Olive Eliza — June 25, 1919

Born at Chipman, educated there and at Twilight, she is married with three children; James Ridley, Judy Pilowsky, Jacque Pilowsky. She is now Mrs. Ken Pederson and lives at Williams Lake, B.C.

James Robert — September 4, 1923

Born at Chipman, educated at Twilight and Grande Prairie High School. He is an aircraft mechanic having worked for C.P.A. and Hudson Bay Oil and Gas. Retired and living at Tappen, B.C. James married Patricia Ireland and they have three sons; Barrie James, married and living in Edmonton, Donald Joseph, and David living in Calgary.

FREDRICH (HOWARD) HIGGINSON

Howard was born in 1915 at Wetaskiwin and grew up on a farm in the Millet district. He married Kathleen Marie Marr in 1937, and they lived on a rented farm, a mile and a half from his home. They moved into the town of Millet in 1939. Howard worked for the U.S. Engineers on the Alaska Highway for over a year, then for the next six years he hauled milk to the Millet Creamery. He sold his milk route, bought his folks place, farmed and milked cows for the next three years. In 1949 the family moved to Barrhead, where Howard bought the cattle and trucked for the next ten years. In 1959, the Higginsons moved to Grande Prairie, to continue his former occupation.

Their family of four children are: Lloyd, who married Lola Drew, lives in Sherwood Park, Edmonton. Eldest daughter Peggy, married Howard Thomas and resided in Barrhead, and has two children Bradly and Carlene. Stanley married Cheryl Moon, have two children Tammy and Shane, and reside in Grande Prairie. Norma is married to Norman Mix and lives in Sherwood Park. They have two children, Michelle and Nichol.

In 1972 the Higginsons bought an acreage N.½ - N.E. 2-72-5-W6, in the Twilight district, where they live at the present time. Howard still buys livestock, and operates his own commercial trucking business.

HILLMER

In the spring of 1945, my husband Chester, myself, and our two daughters, Dawn and Beverly moved from a homestead 22 miles north of Grimshaw to a farm 4½ miles northeast of Grande Prairie which we rented from Ches's cousin, Hugo Arndt. We drove an old 1928 Chev and we were in mud nearly all the way as it was in March. The car broke down as we got to the outskirts of Grande Prairie and we took it to Rodacker's Garage to get repaired before proceeding to the farm.

The years on the farm were quite a struggle as we just rented the land and the crops were poor due to very little moisture. We remained there for six years until the farm was purchased by Everet Sheehan.

Our close neighbors were the McRaes, Newtons, and Mareks. The girls received their schooling in Grande Prairie. There were no school buses at that time so the neighbours all took turns driving the children to Grande Prairie. During the winter months, we would rent a house in Grande Prairie so the girls



The C. Hillmer family.

could get to school and Ches usually worked in the lumber mill for extra income. He also worked as a carpenter for Poole Construction during the construction of the Beaverlodge Airforce Base and for projects for Annis and Finch. He also worked as a volunteer in building the Grande Prairie Arena.

For entertainment we would attend the Twilight School sports day, the Kleskun Hill picnic, ball games and card parties. We always enjoyed going to town on Saturday afternoons for shopping and the matinee.

In 1951 we bought a house from the LaGlace district and had it moved to Grande Prairie. At that time there were only two houses east of the railway track. To the northeast there was farmland. We lived in that house for about six years and then we built a new one next to it where I still reside. Ches did carpenter work and then was employed as a caretaker at the Provincial Building until he retired. After retirement he spent three years as caretaker of the Canadian Utilities Building. Ches passed away in 1969. Beverly, my youngest daughter, and husband Marvin Bliss now live in Grande Prairie after being away for twelve years. She taught school for ten years and Marvin is Travelling Superintendent for the Alberta Wheat Pool. They have a sweet little four year old daughter, Marla Dawn. My oldest daughter, Dawn, is married to Reg Gray originally from Ottawa, and live in North Vancouver. After graduating from high school, Dawn attended Fairview Agricultural College in 1953-1954 and then went through for a stenographer at McTavish Business College in Edmonton. Reg is a Supervisor for a branch of Pitney Bowes in Vancouver.

WILLIAM AND HELEN MAILE

William and Helen Maile arrived in Grande Prairie, April 12th, 1928. They had three sons and three daughters with them. They shipped in two carloads of stock and machinery from Acme, Alberta.

They had purchased the old Axon farm, one section approximately seven miles northeast of Grande Prairie. They had made this move for bigger and better farming. Of course there were difficulties and disappointments. The land was polluted with wild oats and couch. This was no comparison with the farm and home they had left in Acme.

They went into mixed farming, grain and hogs. They were doing very well until the depression set in

and that nightmare put patches on everybody's knees. Water was a problem — drilled wells were few and deep. They used dugouts for stock and used snow water in the winter for cooking and drinking. Wood was the main source for heating and the faithful coal oil lamps for light.

The Mailes were known far and wide for their hospitality. Everybody was welcome. No one ever left without a meal — or a cup of tea and a bun, usually a five course meal. Steaks or pork chops were stacked on platters.

Their transportation was mostly by horse and buggy. A car was a luxury, and very few people drove cars. In spite of it all, people were happy and neighborly.

Entertainment was something to be remembered. The Maile family along with the neighbors would pack lunches for an outing across Bear Creek among the jack pines. The sand ridges were a beautiful sight. Blueberries and cranberries were picked and brought home by the bushel. In the winter card games at Maile's or at the neighbors at least twice a week. Dances took place in the school house. People would drive miles with a team and sleigh and there was always a full house. Everybody danced, sometimes to the music of a lonely violin.

The Maile children attended the Five Mile Creek and Twilight Schools. Since both the schools have been demolished, it it not likely they are remembered by the younger generation.

William Maile, in his mid-thirties, prospered greatly by going into the threshing business and tractor farming. Livestock and grain were out of the question. The cost of freight was more then the price of a two year old steer or a bushel of grain. His dreams came true after many years of hard work. He was now in bigger and better farming and financially well fixed.

William and Helen had a family of nine children. Four sons and five daughters. The oldest daughter, Matilda, married Charles Graff and they have six children. Fred married Roberta Kring and they had four daughters and two sons. Unfortunately they lost one son in a car accident.

Lydia married Douglas Massey and they have two sons and one daughter.

Olga married Stanley Qually and have one son and one daughter.

Eileen married James Goodwin and they have four sons, two were twins.

Lanora married Raymond Jobson and they have two sons and one daughter.

William married Sandra Lewis and they have no children. Art and Adam never married. The entire family are all living and in good health.

William Maile retired in 1947 and moved to the coast to take life easy. Yet one of the hardest blows in his life happened when Mother Maile passed away in their early retirement. Ten years later they laid Father Maile to rest in the same grave.

— by Charlie Graff

JOHN AND TILLIE MAREK AND FAMILY

John Marek was born in what is now Poland in 1889. Since there was no Poland in those years, as it



John and Tillie Marek.

was divided by Prussia, Russia, Austria, etc., Dad attended school in Austria. German was the language. Poland became a country again in 1900. Dad only went to school for two winters as he had to herd cattle the rest of the time.

Dad came from a large farmily, and since the family was poor, he was raised by an aunt and uncle.

After Dad served in the Army his aunt and uncle paid his fare to Canada in 1917. The first two things he did in Canada, was to repay his fare and learn the English language.

He worked around Coleman in the mines, and on ranches in southern Alberta. Unable to collect his wages for two or three years work on a ranch he was given many head of cattle, which he brought to the Sexsmith area where he set up farming on what is now the Bill Kirkham quarter.

During the flu epidemic of 1918 he was in Calgary, and there met my Mother where she was working.

My mother, Tillie Kozina came from Poland at the age of 14, and travelled with her parents over the Edson Trail, in 1914, to the Sexsmith area. She attended school at McHenry and at Grande Prairie with I. V. Maclin as teacher.

Mother worked for Fosters at Sexsmith, at the Clairmont Hotel and then went to Calgary.

In those days people were very self-sustaining, as I recall, the homemade linen sheets which were made by the Kozina family in Poland, were made from home grown flax, as were the wonderful feather quilts — "ticks" as they were called in those days.

Dad and Mother were married in Sexsmith on February 8, 1920, and farmed in the Equity School district. Dad worked at Buffalo Lake's tie camp and on different steam outfits, thus he accummulated machinery, horses, and cows.

During this time three boys, Rudolph, Robert and John Jr. and one girl Emily were born to the family without the assistance of the medical profession. My Mother at age 20 was midwife for her friend and neighbour Mrs. Margaret (Dan) Kirkham with their first child, and Margaret returned the service in December when my parents had their first son.

Mom was a wonderful designer and made all the

clothes for her family. She could soak an old sheep hide, remove the wool, wash and card it and start to knit from the carded wool she held in her lap. There was lots of wool carded for homemade quilts.

This must have been the "land of plenty" as Mom with three small children, the youngest only three months old, picked and canned 70 quarts of wild strawberries.

In 1928 in order to expand, they purchased land in the Twilight School District which is now the Allan Drysdale farm. Still farming with horses they cleared more land, built a large home and a full set of buildings. The basement was dug with a fresno and horses, and the sand was hauled from Bear Lake with a four up.

During the depression it was a hard struggle, but Dad and Mom, with determination and hard work, progressed gradually. One winter Dad made extra money by hauling coal from the Wapiti with a four up. He would leave in the dark of the morning and wouldn't be back till after dark next day.

In 1932 a hail storm destroyed all dreams, and hope and hard work for the year, from 100 acres only enough straw was left for feed for the stock. How we continued only Dad and Mom knew! A helping hand was given in true pioneer spirit when Arnold Christie sold Dad seed, a bushel in spring for bushel in the fall. At the Christmas concert that fall, Mrs. Carveth gave me some cloth for a present.

With the family's help we always had a big garden, cream, milk and eggs. In the fall a load of the best wheat was taken to the Sexsmith flour mill for a yearly supply of flour, bran, shorts and wheatlets. It wasn't unusual to cut up a pail of turnips to take to the cows at milking. We always had too many potatoes, so we'd boil a boiler full and mix it with the extra milk and chop for the pigs. No wonder they were ready for market at five months.!

It seems that we didn't have to buy much, so the occasional pound of butter we sold, bought us sugar and salt, and a bar of sunlight soap did wonders to dishes, clothes, hair, etc.

We always had enough clothes which Mother made even if we went bare foot in the summer. I remember going barefoot to school in grade nine and Bette Carveth did too, but not of necessity. I walked through the dewy grass barefoot to go to the picnic dance, slipping my shoes on behind the school.

Then there were the days when the wood pile got low, and the temperature being 30 or 40 below my brothers would bring a rail of wood into the big unfinished house and start bucksawing fire wood. The living-room was turned into a work shop, where harness was made and repaired, metal pieces were heated in the cook stove and pounded into a necessary repair. New benches, neck yokes, single trees — etc., were fashioned out of birch wood in this same area.

Later in November one afternoon, Dad came home with an elderly lady and Uncle Joseph Kozlowski. That night, taking his lantern, Dad bedded us four older children down in a granary to sleep and when we went back to the house next morning, we had a baby sister, Marjorie (Olga). Two years later, one day after school, we tip-toed into Mom and Dad's bedroom to find our newest sister Bette.

During the war when help was not available the girls at age 10 and 12, had to take turns driving the tractor, during harvest. Girls also worked with threshing crews.

The family progressed to a section of land — buildings, well, etc. Many a time I would listen to Dad, Pearcy Newton, Jim Teeple discussing the feasibility of rubber tired tractors compared to the lug tractors — and whether the combining method of harvesting could replace the old thresher.

Our Christmas' then were certainly different. We loved to go to midnight Mass and our Christmas Concerts, otherwise Christmas didn't have too much to offer.

Our biggest day of the year was when our order of clothes came from Eatons or Simpsons catalogue.

The children got most of their education at Twilight and some attended St. Josephs High in Grande Prairie.

The Mareks sold their farm to Schablins and retired into Grande Prairie in 1952. Mother passed away in 1961 and Father in 1966.

RUDY MAREK

Rudy started school at Equity north of Sexsmith, and finished school at Twilight and then became Dad's



Rudy Marek on leave in Holland — 1943.

righthand man, to help with the farming. After four years in the Canadian Army overseas, Rudy returned to farm the family farm from 1947-1956. Since then Rudy has been employed with the Alberta Wheat Pool Seed Cleaning division and resides in Grande Prairie. He has a gift for fixing anything from the smallest watch to the biggest tractors. He devotes a lot of time looking after the elderly, visiting them or taking them for rides in the country.

ROBERT MAREK

After finishing school at Twilight, Robert joined the R.C.A.F. where he served for two years. One day Robert rushed home from school, and was splitting wood for Mother, when he had the misfortune of cutting off his thumb. This really upset Mother, but Robert said "it's O.K. Mom, I can still milk cows."

In 1947 he married Doreen Reynolds of Eaglesham.



Robert Marek.

They homesteaded in the Eaglesham area and raised two boys and three girls. They are Ronald and Dale, now in Vancouver. Linda Warkentin and Marylin Roberts of Calgary, and Lorna Mae Marek who passed away as a child.

Robert Marek passed away in 1964.

JOHN LUDWIG MAREK JR — by Marjorie Francis

John Jr. was born June 18, 1927 and died April 9th, 1975.

John was the prankster of the family. He loved to laugh and loved it even more when he made others laugh. Making hardships lighter for everybody, himself included, by pointing out the funnier or less serious aspects of a situation came natually to him. It was a gift! Of course, as always happens in such cases, there were people who at the time did not quite see the full humour of a prank.



John Marek Jr.

But most times everybody loved having Johnny around. And when he wasn't around, they would miss him and hope he would turn up to once more bring laughter and a little excitement to their lives. He never seemed content to stand still, always wanting to be on the move.

He left school after completing Grade 11, lured to help in the construction of the new runways being laid at Grande Prairie airport to handle the new larger American transport aircraft which stopped off on their way to Alaska. It was his way of helping the war effort as he was still too young to join the Armed Forces. He never returned to school, although he had once expressed a desire to become a lawyer. Perhaps it is just as well.

Most of his working life he spent as an Iron Worker in the construction industry. He worked on such projects as the Peace River Dam, Pulp Mills on Vancouver Island, and a mine at Zebballos. But he was versatile. He worked for a time in the Leduc oilfields. He was an assistant Diamond Driller. And for a few short weeks, when work was scarce, he was an assistant chef on the C.N.'s trans-continental run.

In 1968 he started out on a planned trip to Europe. A series of events side-tracked him to St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands to visit his cousin Frank Kapitinski. The palm trees and tropical sun cast their spell and he was trapped, both by the islands and a lady, Sarajean (Sally) Brown of Denver, Colorado; great-granddaughter of the man who started the continentally famous Coor's brewery. They were married in 1971 and lived very happily on a houseboat in the islands where Johnny plied his trade as a construction worker, and Sally followed her vocation as a school teacher. In September, 1974 a tumor was discovered in his right lung. Later, this was diagnosed as lung

cancer. He died in St. Joseph's Hospital, Denver, Colorado, April 9th, 1975.

MARJORIE FRANCIS (OLGA MAREK)

I remember the cold. October to April. Sometimes as early as September — always the cold with lots of snow. The cold, split only by a brief burst of spring, summer and fall; winter coming early and staying late.

I remember father going off to winter work at the coal mines and returning with a sleigh load of coal to help drive the cold from the house and keep his wife and six children warm until winter made its short retreat.

I remember the cold as we rode in that same sleigh to school, even though we were covered by a blanket and had large stones that had been heated by the coal, placed at our feet. Twilight school was two miles away and my first year was 1937. Brother Rudy, the eldest of the six Marek children drove the sleigh while his brothers and sisters huddled in the back. Don and Jim, the faithful horse team, were patient as they plodded through the snow. Once, as we passed through a wooded area, the horses became nervous and apprehensive. I think it was late winter or early spring in 1938. Bob looked up and spotted the cougar in the trees. We all shivered as it stared at us with beady, shining eyes. Crouching, waiting, tail wagging slowly back and forth like a pendulum. Rudy urged the horses to a trot and quickly left the danger behind.



Marjorie (Olga Marek) Francis — 1949.

The large sleigh we used only after a heavy snowfall when we needed to break a trail. Most other times we used a cutter pulled by a single horse, Kate.

Twilight as I remember it was one large school room. In this room, twenty to thirty somewhat unruly children were taught grades one to eight (one to nine during the Second World War), by a single, brave teacher. Sometimes a teacher stayed only a year; some lasted a little longer. I remember the names; the faces are a little hazy. Miss Partridge, Miss Mix, Miss Beveridge, Miss Lewis, Miss Mare, Mrs. Morrison Mrs. Westerndorf, and Miss Nicholichuk.

From spring thaw to fall freeze we travelled the two miles on foot. Rain or shine. When the weather was fine, Bette, Johnny, and I would race one another, running until we were breathless. When it rained, Johnny would march up front trying his best to shelter his younger sisters.

I recall a humorous incident at the school one spring. Winter had snapped back and dropped a heavy load of wet snow. It was lunch and a car had run off the road near Twilight and stuck in a snow bank. Some of the bigger boys decided it would be great fun to snowball the unfortunate stranger who was struggling to shovel his car free. Some fifteen minutes later, after school re-started, the stranger entered Twilight's school room. The spring visit of the school inspector had begun.

I remember, toward the end of a school year, there would be a softball tournament among the school districts. And after the games, picnics. Potato salad, trifle, bananas, coke and ice cream. In the evening there would be a community dance, except that during the war a shortage of musicians sometimes forced us to forego dancing.

Other shortages showed up during the war. Not the least of these was the shortage of help on the farms. One year, when the three eldest children were off in the services, father became very ill and was confined to bed. The three youngest children had to take the crop off. Two sections of land were to be harvested. A sizable job for three inexperienced youngsters in their early teens.

The war brought other things to the north. Construction crews, and United States Armed Forces. Perhaps my most vivid memory of this is of a huge convoy of trucks passing our farm one night on the way to Grande Prairie and Dawson Creek carrying equipment for the building of the Alaska Highway. I felt grateful they were friends and not an invading enemy as I watched the glare of the headlights and listened to the engines grind for what seemed like hours.

I left Twilight before the war's end and moved to Grande Prairie to take my high school education at St. Joseph's. During the first year, I worked for room and board while living with a family whose name I do not recall. Later, when my sister Emily returned and started her taxi business, I worked for her part-time, and we lived together with my cousin Genivieve Spacil, in a rented house on Richmond Avenue, just opposite the old Donald Hotel. I remember shortly after

how overjoyed and grateful the whole family was when brother Rudy returned from the war. How lucky we felt and how our sympathy went out to those not so lucky. Those whose loved ones had not returned or had come back broken and crippled. Then it became time to chose a profession.

The glamour of the Airlines attracted me. I wanted to be an Air Hostess. All the travel and excitement. To my dismay I discovered that airlines required nursing training from all applicants. I had, therefore, only one course open. In September, 1948 I entered Edmonton General Hospital to train as a nurse. There followed three hard but satisfying years of 12 hour work days and six day work weeks at low pay. I graduated and qualified as an R.N. in the fall of 1951.

By this time I had discarded my original intention of becoming an Air Hostess. Nursing was now my profession and I wanted to use it. I left Edmonton and found a job in British Colubmia's Okanagan Valley. For five years I worked there and enjoyed it. Then a vicious bout of rheumatic fever took my eyesight and robbed me of my ability to use my nursing.

I moved to Vancouver, where I met my husband, Jim, an ex-Royal Navy Photographer. We were married in Grande Prairie in September of 1961 and have lived since then in Vancouver.

BETTE MAREK

Bette attended school at Twilight and took part of her high school at St. Joseph's.

She did a considerable amount of travelling, working in Grande Prairie, Dawson Creek, Calgary and Vancouver, and worked on a ranch at 100 Mile House in B.C.



Betty Marek at 13, rides the winner for Bob Rycroft.

Her main hobby and work was with horses, and she had an exciting career as a jockey. She had a way, and a love for horses, which enabled her to win over any renegade of a horse.

In her early teens, she was jockey for Ewurt Ellis, Bob Rycroft, etc. Later she purchased "King Havoc" a horse that wasn't in the money, but under her guidance, he was the winning horse at the time. She also rode in the Stampedes throughout the Peace River Country. Bette now resides in Grande Prairie.

DENNIS AND OLIVE McINTOSH

We purchased the N.W. 9-72-5-W6th from Fred Drysdale in 1968. Ray Scott homesteaded this land in about 1911, Joe Harrison became owner in 1929 and Roy Watson in 1946.

We had farmed previously at Grovedale, moving here to be closer to schools and work. There were no buildings so our first task was drilling a well and building a house. The rich fertile soil for landscaping and gardening derives from the Harrison farm yard of many years ago.

Dennis was raised in the Dimsdale district, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. L. McIntosh. Olive is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Spry of east Sexsmith.

Dennis worked for Fenly Machine and Welding for three years as bookkeeper. He then joined the Independent Order of Foresters, spending the next six years as a field worker.

We are now farming full time on a small acreage specializing in the egg business.

Our oldest daughter, Sherida, was born in 1950 and attended school at Grovedale, Grande Prairie High and the business college. She worked first for a lawyer McGurk, the Guidance Clinic, Industrial College and Regional College. She married Ken Rossol in 1972 and their son Blake was born in January, 1977.

Bob born in 1953, went to school at Grovedale, Montrose Jr. High and Grande Prairie Comp. He is employed at Canfor.

Ron was born in 1955, attended Grovedale, Harry Balfour, and Grande Prairie Comp. and is now taking Graphic Arts in S.A.I.T. in Calgary. He drove for Swan Buses in Grande Prairie and Brewster Tour Buses of Calgary.

Barbara was born in 1957 and took her schooling at Grovedale, Harry Balfour and Grande Prairie Comp.

Following one year at Grande Prairie Regional College she is now in her final year in the Arts program, majoring in psychology at the University of Alberta.

Russell born in 1963 is taking his schooling at Harry Balfour. His interests are in the field of sports, bowling, basketball and is a hockey fan.

RITCHIE McRAE SR.

Evelyne Twombly came over Slave Lake, Peace River, Dunvegan Trail in 1909, at the age of 13. She helped drive a team and settle with parents on the west side of Clairmont Lake, later moved 1½ miles east of Clairmont Lake.

In 1911, Ritchie McRae, at the age of 20, hired J. B. Taft to bring him and Jimmy Cluston to the Peace River District by stage. About 90 miles out of Edson,

the trail was too narrow to travel with wagon, so Ritchie and Jimmy Cluston walked the rest of the way.

Ritchie returned to home north of Winnipeg. In 1912, Ritchie and brother Tommie came in over the Edson Trail with five horses, three cows and some machinery. Ritchie and Tommie hauled some logs to build a cabin and barn. They also helped haul logs for the first Grande Prairie hospital, and a house and barn for Stewart Newton.

On December 28, 1914 Evelyn and Ritchie were married in the Twombly home, by Rev. Forbes, with Mary Twombly as bridesmaid and Tommie McRae as bestman. They moved into the 14' x 16' sod roof cabin on Ritchie's homestead on N.E. Section 1, Township 72, Range 6, West of the 6th Meridian, where they still live, now four miles northeast of Grande Prairie.

In the spring of 1915, Tommie went to Pouce Coupe to a Sports Day, the river rose above the banks. At night Tommie headed home and was drowned.

In 1915, Ritchie helped build grade on the railroad with horses and scraper. Every winter firewood had to be hauled and sawed. The neighbours got out together to saw the wood into stove lengths with a buzz saw, run, by first a one cylinder water cooled stationery engine, later by tractors. The general crew at the McRae's were Bill Abernathy, Jim Teeples, Percy Newton, Tom Paul, Rob Marek or Rudy Marek and Ritchie. In the early years either Bill Pender or Jack Wishart had the sawing rig and did custom work. Later Percy Newton had a saw mandel, each of the neighbours used their own tractors.

A new house was built in 1917.

Tragedy hit in 1923 when fire burnt the house right at harvest time. Ritchie was cutting grain with binder, Evelyn got the children out, and a trunk, the rest of the contents were all lost. The next day someone also stole a hog, being smoked in a smoke house near by.

In 1924, a small house was hauled out from Grande Prairie and built onto, it is still lived in by Evelyn and Ritchie.

Evelyn and Ritchie raised six children, Myrtle — Mrs. Eric Partlow (deceased) Grande Prairie; Ethel — Mrs. Charlie Penson, Westbank, B.C.; Elma — Mrs. Elmer Boe, Grande Prairie; Edgar, Nanaimo, B.C.; Ritchie Jr. and Barbara still on farm; Frances — Mrs. Alex Wozny, Ft. St. John, B.C.

Ritchie farmed with horses until 1942, then nothing ran like a John Deere. Ritchie Jr. took over the farming in the late '50s.

On December 28, 1964 the McRaes celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with family and friends.

On December 28th, 1974 the McRae's celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary with five generations in attendance, the McRae's, Ethel Penson — daughter, Joyce Smart — granddaughter, Bob Smart — great-grandson, and Nicole Smart — great-great-granddaughter. Many relatives, friends and all the family attended. Mayor Jim May presented them with a swan emblem of the city of Grande Prairie. Congratulations were received from Queen Elizabeth, Prime Minister Trudeau, Governor-General Jules Ledger and John Diefenbaker.

THE HOMESTEADER — years ago Ethel McRae wrote this poem to her Dad

Into the wilderness he came as a lad.
With a team of horses and a heart that was sad
He had left his home where the Red River goes
And journeyed north where the Peace River flows.
He staked his claim on a piece of land
Of poplar and willow and prairie grand
He fought the elements severe and cold
And hardships of which he has never told
Out of this wilderness he carved a home
For wife and family that were his own
He succeeded through blood, sweat and tears
No wonder he has loved it all the years
There he will stay with a heart that is glad
And I am so proud of this man that is my dad.

RITCHIE McRAE Jr.

Barbara Small was born in Salmon Arm, B.C. and later moved to Czar, Alberta and at the age of nine, Barbara moved with her family to Rio Grande. In 1943 the Smalls bought the old Moore farm 1½ miles east of Grande Prairie.

Ritchie was born in the old log hospital in Grande Prairie and raised on a farm four miles northeast of Grande Prairie on the N.E. of 1-72-6 West of 6th. Ritchie went to Montrose School on horseback until his younger sister Frances started, then they went by car in the summer and by cutter in the winter. Then for two years Percy Newton, H. Arndt and Ritchie Sr. took turns driving and snow plowing which was done with horses and a V plow made of planks. The children were Jean and Jerry Newton, Emma, Helen and Arthur Arndt, Frances and Ritchie McRae.



Ritchie McRae Jr. family — 1969. Back: Clara, Sandra, Marilyn, Gary. Front: Glenda, Ritchie and Barbara Benbow.

Barbara and Ritchie were married June 25, 1947. Bridesmaid was Annabelle Morrison (Mrs. Tom Funnel) and bestman was Herb Crerar.

Barbara worked at the Artcraft Studio and Ritchie worked at Northern Planer Mill.

In their spare time they built a house in Macklinville with the help of family and friends. There were only about ten houses in that part of town then.

Late in 1948 they sold the house and moved to Fairview. Ritchie drove the Imperial Oil Truck delivering gasoline and oil for C. A. Penson.

In 1950 they moved back and built a house just south of the Grande Prairie Auction Mart on Highway Two. Ritchie worked for Jack Caldwell in the summer and at the Grande Prairie Lumber Company in the winter.

Ritchie then started working for the county in 1953, running the maintainer in Division 1, 2 and 3 and helped on the home farm.

In 1963 their house was moved to the present location, in the same yard as Ritchie's parents. We put power and running water in both houses and took over the farming.

They raised five children, four girls and one boy. Marilyn, Mrs. Ed Plevin, living at Hawk Hills. They have two children, Amanda and Tamara. Ed runs the Alberta Wheat Pool elevator there. Clara, Mrs. Alf Parlee, has three boys — Doug, Bob and Ronnie. Alf works for Midwest Electric as an electrician. Sandra, Mrs. Jim East, has one girl, Brandy, and one boy Rick. Jim is assistant manager of Alberta Wheat Pool elevator in Grande Prairie. Gary and Betty have a little girl named Tammy, Gary works for Midwest Electric as an electrician. They live in the same yard in a trailer and help on the farm. Glenda, Mrs. Colin McLeod, has no children as yet. Colin works for Proctor and Gamble Cellulose.

Barbara and Ritchie celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary June 25th, in 1972. The celebration took place in the Park Hotel with the original wedding party along with many friends and relatives in attendance.

MIRAN AND ALBERTA McKEEMAN

Miran and Alberta McKeeman moved to the Twilight district May 5th, 1948. We bought the E.½ of Section 8, Township 73, W. of 6th Meridian from the V.L.A. We had lived one year on a rented farm at Buffalo Lakes after World War II.

Our first child was a son, Dennis, who was five months old when we moved to our home.

Roy and Ruby Watson had bought the half section just east of us and since there was no house on it we shared the Harrison house on our half for a few months until Roy was able to get their house ready.

They had a baby girl, Mary, just three weeks younger than Dennis. You can be sure we had many exciting times together.

We had a tractor, a John Deere A R, to start farming, but many used horses for a year or so.

We had very difficult times the first few years. A big dust storm, during the first spring, piled dust up from the fields like snow banks around our house and out buildings. Miran had to drive Ruby and me with our babies up to Gene and Olive Kuykendalls as the dust was so thick in the house we could hardly breathe. As we came out on the highway, one-half mile north, the sun was shining and it was like another world. Olive Kuykendall sure did laugh when she saw us, but like the wonderful person she was, she made us stay the day and in the evening Miran was able to drive us to my Mom and Dad's place at Scenic Heights. When the wind died down we came back and proceeded to clean up the mess. We used a tractor and fresno to take away the clay banks from around the buildings.

After it rained the crops finally came up and was starting to head out, we had a bad hailstorm which damaged the crops considerably. Later the crops recovered some, but they were so late the frost got them. The heads were light, mostly bran. The whole crop could be hauled in one truck — it was so light.

The next couple of years weren't too good either, but eventually we were able to get a pull type combine. We were unable to get a pickup for it so had to straight combine.

One year the crops stayed out over winter and we had to combine in the spring before seeding.

We had four children — Dennis, born January 16th, 1947. Linda, born September 9th, 1948. Lloyd, born November 29th, 1950 and Wray, born May 1st, 1952. They went to Montrose school in Grande Prairie on Lyle Kuykendall's bus, later they attended the Harry Balfour School when it opened, then on to the Grande Prairie Composite High School.

Dennis married Patricia Card of Edmonton and they have two girls, Kimberly and Kelly. Dennis works for B.C. Hydro near Vancouver.

Linda is a commercial artist and lives in Calgary. She works for Gilbert Graphics.

Lloyd married Janet Isberg of Grande Prairie. They have moved into their new home on the south quarter of our farm. Lloyd works for A.G.T.

Wray married Debbie Deduck and they have a little son, Darren. They live on the home acreage.

We sold our north quarter to Jim Vestergard and bought a house in Summerland, B.C. in August of 1974. Lloyd bought the south quarter, and Wray bought the house and twenty acres.

We are enjoying our new home and the mild winters in B.C. We will never forget our wonderful friends and neighbors, we have alot of treasured memories!

WESLEY MILLS FAMILY — written by Christina Mills

In 1913, Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Mills and their two children Wesley and Marguerite started out from Edmonton and came over the Edson Trail in a covered wagon. They had homesteaded six miles northeast of the hamlet of Grande Prairie. Roy McDermitt, Mrs. Mills' brother, came to join them.

Many times Mrs. Mills would be left alone with the two children while the men went out to Edson to get supplies. She would bolt the door and keep the gun by the bed. The first two nights she heard an owl and a coyote. Being raised in the city she didn't know what they were. Every other day a Mounted Police riding a horse would stop and see how they were making out.

In 1917, she was expecting a baby, so she went to Edmonton to a hospital, there daughter Christina was born.

Every Christmas "Ma" Mills would invite all the bachelors to her place for dinner. These were Dick Deering, Shorty Ward, Dave Barber, Haywire Johnson, Norman Langel, Lee Young and one of the Banar-

do boys, who was lost in the war. Lee Young left the country and later died of cancer. Others invited were Windy Smith, Jack Axon and last but not least Tom Warden. "Ma" would get out her bottle of homemade Saskatoon wine and everyone would have a "wee nip."

One cold winter day Mr. Mills was on his way home from town, he picked up a lady walking and gave her a ride. It was very cold, she had a long way to walk to get home, so she stayed overnight and he took her home the next day. This was Mrs. Joe Davis who was nursing for Dr. L. J. O'Brien.

About 1943 the Mills' moved to town. They drove the first spike for the sidewalks when they were put in, in Macklinville.

Mr. Mills passed away in 1961, one year after they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Wesley is now retired from Edmonton's city light and power. They had two girls and one boy. Marguerite Brown has two boys and lives at Langley. Christina married Alex Morrice and had two daughters Esther and Barbara. They adopted a boy who passed away in 1974.

Mrs. Mills at the age of 97 years is very active and is a resident of Central Park Lodge in Grande Prairie.

THE MORROW FAMILY — by Phyllis Morrow MacDonald Peterson

I was ten when we moved to Grande Prairie in 1934. We stayed three years, renting the J. O. Patterson farm, which I believe was five miles northeast of Grande Prairie, and a mile from Twilight School.

At so young an age I was not terribly concerned with grown up matters, so what I remember best are things that are important to a child. I was aware, however, of the reasons for us moving. My mother and dad, Lily and Richard Otway Morrow, had farmed on the Alberta prairies near a town called Sedalia for 25 years. The dry years and depression had finally left them with two choices — accept relief or move, and my father being a proud man, chose the latter. He did accept the government's help in the form of relief cars, wherein we transported our goods and chattels. My brother Bert came on the train with the livestock. Our dog, a black and white mongrel named Rex, departed the train at Westlock, never to be seen by us again.

We chose Grande Prairie as our location because my Uncle Ross McMillan was with the Frontier Lumber Co. in Grande Prairie and he had found a farm for us to rent. I think worty of note is the fact that my Dad was at the time approaching his 60th birthday and having to start from scratch again. Only now do I appreciate how he must have felt, but he did have two stalwart sons to help him, and later on although Jim left to go into the Army, my Dad, by dint of hard work and long hours, did, once again, become solvent.

We were six, Dad, Mom, Bert, Lillian, Jim and me in order of age. (Two older children, Harry and Emily were already out on their own.) Bert was 23, Lil 17, Jim 14, and me 10.

Jim having finished grade eight was considered old enough to quit school, but Lil and I were still in school. She went to Five Mile and I went to Twilight. The people I remember best are the Gerald Carveths, the Swansons, the Harrisons and the Mailes because they all had kids with whom I went to school.



A little picnic on the way to Grande Prairie Sports in the 1920's.

While we were there Bert married Ida Courtemanche from Consort and they built a little house on the property we were on. Bert and Ida are now in Guatemala and their only child Nellie Snyder, lives in Vauxhall.

We were very poor, I guess, but we had fun. We rode horses a lot. Swansons had a shetland pony who managed to dump most of us kids through the quick movements. They also had mules (fun to ride) and even a race horse!

We didn't have a car. A team of horses and wagon or sleigh was our means of transportation. In the winter Dad put bells on the horses' harness — a sound in the crispy cold of a winters night that I still remember with sheer delight!

Lil finished grade 10 and went to work for my uncle in the office of the Frontier Lumber Co. Later she married Hedley Bird and had two sons, Barry and Michael who now live in White Rock, B.C.

Lil died suddenly in 1972 and Hedley died in August, 1973.

Jim married Theresa Cormier from High Prairie after the war and they had five children; Richard, Patty, Doug, Karen and Brad. Richard, Doug and Karen live in Grande Prairie, Pat in Grande Cache and Brad with his mother in Dawson Creek. Jim also died suddenly in 1975.

I married Gordon MacDonald of Wanham in 1945, had three children; Ken, Judy and Rod, but unfortunately Gordon was killed in an aeroplane crash in 1953, flying from Grande Prairie to Edmonton. In 1963 I was married again to Palmer Peterson and added Susan and Christopher to our family. Ken and Rod MacDonald live in White Rock, B.C. and Judy and I, with our husbands and families, share the same address.

My Dad died in 1946 at the age of 72, my Mother in 1970, coming up to her 88th birthday.

The years at Grande Prairie, though few, were good ones. Good family fun and good friends and neighbours. They gave us a new start and new hope for the future.

STEWART NEWTON AND FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Newton with a family of five children, came over the Edson Trail in 1911, from Oxbow, Saskatchewan.



Stewart Newton with his prize stallion.

Stewart filed on land 4½ miles Northeast of Grande Prairie, land which was later farmed by Hugo Arndt, and is now owned by Everet Sheehan.

Stewart was a great lover of horses and raised registered Percherons. Stewart passed away in 1927.

Two girls Ruth and Pearl with their Mother, not liking our winter weather moved to Oregon, and have all since passed on.

Harry Newton was married to Evelyn Hooke, and they owned and operated the 5 to $1.00 Store in Grande Prairie for many years.

Harvy became a teacher and taught at Lindsay School about 1923 or 1924.

The Harvy Newtons now live in California where Harvy is ministering in God's vineyard.

When Percy became of age he filed on land across



Alice and Percy Newton, Jerry and Jean.



Turning the sod on the Newton farm.



Percy, Alice and Jerry Newton on the Goodwin ferry.



Tom Newton's outfit brought joy to the hearts of youngsters in the late 1920's and 30's.

the road from his Dad, which is now the Murray Fauls place.

The McCulloughs, father George, brothers Henry, Wallace and Gordon, sisters Grace, Alice and Hazel came over the Edson Trail in 1913-1914. Most settled in the Valhala area. Percy Newton and Alice McCullough were married in 1929. I recall Hazel working for Jack Oatway.

Percy used to do a lot of custom work with his threshing outfit, seed cleaning plant and the buzz saw for cutting fire wood.

Two children were born to this couple — Jean in 1932 and Jerry in 1937. As neighbours Jean and Bette Marek enjoyed horseback riding.

Jean lives in Beaverlodge and Jerry is now in Kamloops working with the city Gas Company.

Tom Newton, a brother of Stewarts, was very well known in the Grande Prairie area, as he was a "Watkins" man for many years.

GORDON OATWAY

Gordon Oatway and son Harvey now own the half section 5-72-5. The N.E.¼ of 5-72-5 was homesteaded on by Jimmie Scott. Mr. Scott only broke enough land to prove it up, after which he listed it with the Lands Office and left the country. The land laid idle for a number of years, then in 1936 Mr. John Oatway bought it and several years later passed it down to his son Gordon. The S.E. 5-72-5 was homesteaded on by Mr. Kitchen, who farmed it until after World War I then Mr. Butchard bought it through the Soldiers Settlement Board. Mr. Butchard rented it out to several different farmers nearby. Then in 1937 Mr. John Oatway bought this quarter also — for his son Gordon.

Harvey Oatway took over farming the family farm in 1964. Gordon and Marge Oatway also have a daughter Muriel, who is married to Bud Pearson. From this marriage two grandchildren (Bonnie and Gordie) have been added to the family circle.

ARVID OLDERSKOG

Arvid was born at Poplar Hill, Alberta to Harold and Ruth Olderskog who immigrated here from Norway and farmed in the Valhalla district until their semi-retirement to Grande Prairie, Alberta. At present they are living in New Westminister, B.C. happily involved in church work.

Arvid has three sisters, Hazel is married to Steve Tofteland, they are Angus cattle and Arabian horse breeders as well as grain farmers in the Valhalla district. They have three sons and one daughter, one son passed away as a result of a tractor accident August, 1976. Gayle is a school teacher and studies music. She is married to John Polson and they have two daughters and live in New Westminister, B.C. Norma is married to Fred Plummer who is in the radio business and Norma is in the real estate business in Grande Prairie. Arvid grew up on the farm and after finishing school he studied two years at the Fairview Agriculture College. After which he got a job with J. H. Ashdown Wholesale in Grande Prairie. Later he changed and worked for Northern Alberta Railways Co.

Both my parents Karl and Stephanie Mycek came to Watino, Alberta from Poland. My father worked for the Railroad and farmed part time. After a lengthy illness my father passed away January 18, 1974. Mother is living in Grande Prairie. My brother Walter married Gail Evans and they have three daughters and one son. Walter owns the Midwest Electric Store in Peace River. My sister Margie is a school teacher, specializing in early childhood education in Edmonton.

In 1960 Arvid started work at the Court House and we built our first home in the city. But somehow we just weren't content and we bought this quarter of land from Ed and Elsie Schroeder in May, 1964. Although Arvid continues to work at the Court House he has enjoyed his farming operation which he does himself, he's grown almost all the different crops and he's been in the cattle business. Our three children have had calves in the Clairmont 4-H Beef Club.

Ricky is 15 years old and in grade 10. He likes the farm and after finishing school he'd like to go into farming. Darcy is 12 years old and in grade 6. He is interested in motors, the ski-doo and motor bikes are his specialties. But he also loves animals. Margie is 9 years old and in grade 3. She likes music and plays the organ. She enjoys plants and gardening and loves dogs.

We all enjoy this farm-living, and this year we built a new home and plan to retire right here.

ERNEST J. PATTERSON — by Ernest J. Patterson (July, 1976)

I was born April 18, 1901 on a farm near Osceola, Iowa, U.S.A. where I lived with my family until the first part of February in 1916 when I made my first trip to Canada with my four older brothers. My brothers took three car loads of stock, machinery and household goods on the train as far as High Prairie, Alberta. That was as far as the railroad went at that time, then they freighted it on in with sleighs and horses. As I was the kid, I walked and drove the cattle all the way. We stopped at night at Indian camps and took about a week to reach the Bezanson area. I lived there until the 3rd of July when my oldest brother, Art and family, decided to move back to Iowa. The train had finally come to Grande Prairie in March of that year. There had been so much rain that summer and the train ran



Baxter Davis Patterson, seated, with sons, Rex, Guy, Ernie and Victor.

so slowly, it took a week to get to Edmonton. Many times the passengers would get off the train and pick berries along the way.

I then lived in Iowa, near Osceola, until the spring of 1917 when my father and I came back to Canada for one year. While here I spent most of my time herding cattle as there were no fences, we also spent some time cutting brush. Then in the fall of 1918 my Father and I moved back to Iowa. I lived and farmed in Iowa for the next few years and married Lela Avis of Osceola, Iowa. We farmed there until March of 1926 and then moved to Canada.

We took an immigrant car with our household furnishings, some machinery and livestock. It took us two weeks to arrive in the Bezanson area where we spent the summer. The mosquitoes were so bad we had to build smudges at night so we could sleep — we lived in a log house.

That fall my Father bought a section of land six miles east and north of Grande Prairie (4-72-5-W6), we moved on the farm in October of that year. There was no house on the farm so we moved a granary and lived in it for a month until we were able to move a house out from Grande Prairie. We had no well. We used slough water in the summer and melted snow in the winter for drinking and cooking.

In December of 1927 our first baby was born (December 31st) and we named her Fern. The night that she was born was the coldest night we spent in 19 years in Canada — 68 below Fahrenheit on the government thermometer, that was a very cold winter. That same winter we bought a quarter section and built a house on it and moved there in the spring of 1928. On March 10, 1930 another daughter was born. Then in the spring of 1932 we moved back to the original section, still owned by my Father, where we farmed until the fall of 1934. Our sons, Ernest Jr. and Kenneth, were born February 5, 1933 and July 17, 1934. Our oldest girl, Fern, started school that fall at Twilight School. In November of 1934 we moved to a half section four miles east of Grande Prairie (E.½ 28-71-5-W6) where we farmed. On November 9, 1935 our daughter, Shirley, was born.

During this time we did our farming with horses. To keep our food cool we put up an ice house and the following year we drilled a well so we had plenty of water pumped by a wind mill.

On April 28, 1941 another daughter, Julia, was born. Our children attended school at the Five Mile School.

We lived here and farmed with horses until October of 1945 when we had a sale and moved back to Iowa where we lived and farmed for 31 years.

During the years we lived in Canada we had no electricity or telephones. In the winter I hauled wood from across Bear Creek, about 10 miles. Some winters I made 110 trips, I sold wood in Grande Prairie.

We have made several trips back to Canada to visit relatives and friends, and plan another trip this summer.

VICTOR PATTERSON AND FAMILY — May 1976

Victor Daniel Patterson was born in Illinois, U.S.A. April 12th, 1895. The next year his father, mother and family moved to Clarke County, Iowa, U.S.A.

He came to Glen Leslie, Alberta in March, 1916 with his father and four brothers, trekked over the trail from Athabasca, Alberta. He homesteaded the S.W.¼ 10-72-3-W6, but didn't stay long enough to prove up on it. He met Mae Harker in San Fransisco and they were married there September 26, 1929. Mae was born May 24, 1904 in Manitoba but also lived in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. They had two children — Baxter David (called B.D.) June 19, 1930 and Patricia Mae, March 5, 1935.



Victor and Mae Patterson, Patricia and B.D.

In July, 1936 they came to the Grande Prairie area to live for a few years. When they first arrived they stayed with brother Ernie and family (S.E. 28-71-5-W.6) for a few months then moved to N.E. 32-71-5-W6th, for the winter. In the spring of 1937 they moved again to the Axon land (Section 4-72-5-W6) that his father now owned (Baxter Davis Patterson). In 1940 they moved to Goodwin, Alberta. They lived there until 1952 when they moved back to Iowa and then to California in 1953.

Victor Patterson died July 27, 1959 and Mae in 1970. However in 1967 Mae drove by herself and her little dog by car all the way from California to Grande Prairie and back.

Patricia married Duane Spencer and they have three children, David, Lynne and Michele. They live at Sebastapol, California.

Baxter David (B.D.) married Barbara Pogue and have three children; Loran, Dianne and Daniel. In 1972 Patricia and Duane Spencer and family came by truck and camper up to the Grande Prairie area for a visit with friends and relatives.

CHARLES RAISON FAMILY (by Freda Raison Reynolds

Mr. and Mrs. Raison were raised on farms in the Tillsonburg district of Ontario. When they were married in September, 1900, my father was working as a moulder in the Massey-Harris foundry in Brantford. The two older sons, Oscar and Clarence were born there. By the time I was born in 1907, the family had



Raison family, 1925. L. to R.: Oscar, Thomas, Freda, Clarence, seated — Mother and Dad.

moved to St. Thomas, where my father had opened a grocery store. My younger brother, Thomas, was also born in St. Thomas.

In the spring of 1919, my father sold the grocery store and bought a garage business in Detroit, Michigan. He sold out there in the fall of 1920, and decided to take a trip out west. When he returned home, he announced that he had bought a section of land near Grande Prairie, Alberta. The farm had been purchased from Dr. Sproule, who moved into Grande Prairie to practise his profession of Dentistry.

In March, 1921, all our possessions, including a newly purchased tractor and a Model T Ford touring car, were loaded into a railway car, and we boarded the train for Edmonton. From Edmonton to Grande Prairie, we travelled on the old E.D. and B.C. Railway, and we were on that train from Monday afternoon until Thursday morning.

After breakfasting at the old Grande Prairie Hotel, we were established in the Immigration Hall, where we lived for three days while my father went into the country and bought some horses and sleighs and moved some furniture out to the farm eight miles northeast of town. The house was not finished and it was very cold. We went to bed that first night with all our clothes on and piles of quilts over us. Fortunately, wood was plentiful and the heater and cook stove were kept going day and night until the walls could be insulated.

The farm at that time was part of the Kleskun Lake School District and the school was two and a half miles from home. Thomas and I started school on March 21, I in grade and Thomas in grade 5. With us included, there were nine pupils, a big change from our school in Detroit. At first one of the older brothers took us to school in the sleigh, but when work began on the land we had to walk. By the next fall, we had horses to ride. I was able to go to Kleskun Lake school for grades 9 and 10, then I went to the Grande Prairie High School. Thomas did all his high school work in Grande Prairie. At that time all twelve grades were taught in Montrose School.

There was no well on our farm and we got our water from a slough near the house for some time — we strained the leaves and poliwogs out of it. At first my mother boiled all the water for drinking and made weak tea of it, but in time we learned to drink it straight. And later my father built a cement cistern near the house, and hauled water to it from Turner's dam for a while, then built a dam of our own in a draw near the house.

We always had a large garden, and my parents included a large raspberry patch, then some saskatoon bushes were planted, and with cultivation, they gave us nice large berries.

Though the farm was a whole section, not much of it was cultivated so my father, Oscar and Clarence worked hard at breaking more land. Wheat was the main crop, but they always had plenty of oats for the stock. One year my father planted about ten acres near the house, which had proved to be quite weedy, to sunflowers. They did well and the cows found them to be quite a treat that fall.

There were always cows to be milked and cared for, and my mother made butter to sell in town or trade for groceries. She must have made thousands of pounds of butter over the years.

The first two or three years proved to be dry and, not having much land in crop, my father decided gasoline was too much added expense, so neither the tractor nor the car got much use. Horses did most of the farm work, and the team and buggy were used for going to town or wherever. Of course we always had saddle horses too.

The biggest event of the year in those first years was the Christmas concert at school. For a few years, our school combined with Crystal Creek and Kleskun Hill schools and held one big concert in the Kleskun Hill Hall. The hall was also the center for dances, which were about all the entertainment to be had in the winter. Community picnics and Sports Days were summer pastimes. In our family, sing-songs around the piano occupied many an evening, especially before the advent of the radio.

Oscar stayed on the farm only four or five years, then he went back to Detroit to work. He married his wife, Lillian, in 1930. Their only child, Charles, was born in May, 1936. That fall they bought a farm just north of the home farm and tried farming for two or three years. But farming was very unrewarding in those depression years and they eventually returned to Detroit to stay.

Oscar worked in an auto parts factory and had been a shop foreman there for some years before he died in November, 1958.

Clarence was married in 1927 to Isabelle Vance of Crystal Creek district. They lived with Isabelle's

mother and worked her farm until about 1944. Then they moved into Grande Prairie. In the summer of 1945, Clarence became Engineer and General Maintenance chief at the Grande Prairie Hospital, and worked there until he died in September, 1963.

Their only child, Lorene, finished high school in Grande Prairie, then went to Toronto to train as a nurse. She stayed in Toronto to work, was married there to Alan Hughes, and had two daughters, Lynn and Leana. In the fall of 1959, the family moved to Grande Prairie, where Lorene still works at the Grande Prairie Hospital. Isabelle lives with them.

When Thomas finished high school, he decided against staying on the farm so he went back to Detroit and got a job.

I went to Normal School in Calgary, taught school for two years, then married Reg Reynolds in 1928. We lived in Wembly for a year, farmed awhile, then went homesteading near Sturgeon Lake in the fall of 1931. Our daughter, Shirley, was born in July, 1932 and our son Reg. Jr., whom we called Buddy, in March, 1934. By 1938, Reg. had proved up the homestead and Shirley was old enough to go to school, so we moved into Grande Prairie. Our daughter, Hazel, was born in July, 1942.

Reg. worked at various jobs for a year or so, until he got work at the hospital as assistant to the Engineer. The hospital had only forty beds at that time so the two men did all the maintenance work, besides looking after the heating and high pressure boilers. When the head man enlisted in the Army, Reg. became chief and held that job until we decided to move east in June, 1945. My brother Clarence took over the work at that time.

We settled in London, Ontario, just as the Second World War was ending.

Shirley became a teacher, got married in 1954 to Bill Stoner, who is a Denture Therapist, and they live in Niagara Falls. They have two children — Mark 11, and Alison 7. Shirley now works as a school librarian.

Reg. Jr. graduated from Western University in London with an M.A. in Psychology. He lives in Oakville with his wife, Joyce, and three children; Kimberley 16, Danny 13, and Alison 7.

Hazel went to college in Iowa, and married an American, C. H. McKee, in July, 1964. They have three children — Sean 11, Chadd 9, and Shannon 6.

All our children had left London, so in 1971, Reg. and I moved to Niagara Falls to be near Shirley. Reg. died in September, 1974, and I now live with Shirley and Bill and their family.

In 1943 my parents sold the farm to Gene Kuykendall, and they moved into Grande Prairie, where they lived next door to us until we came east in 1945.

In September, 1950, they had their fiftieth wedding anniversary, and some of the old friends celebrated with them. About a month later, they came to our place in London. My father was quite ill at the time and he died in January, 1951. My mother made her home with us until her death in July, 1963.

MAX AND EVELYN SUTHERLAND

Max and Evelyn Sutherland were both raised in districts around Grande Prairie. Max, the son of county council member, Seath Sutherland and his wife Helen, grew up in Dimsdale. Evelyn was a "Small" before she was married and grew up on a farm in the Five Mile District. They were married in 1949 and had seven children.

In the early years of their marriage, Max worked on oil rigs and Evelyn and their family often went with him and lived on the rig sites. They also lived in Valleyview while he worked in the oil patch. They bought a section of land in 1957, where they now live, and a new house was built on the southwest quarter in 1960.

During their school years, the children participated in different sports and some of the older ones were active in 4-H activities.

After they moved to the farm most of their livelihood came from cattle until 1970, when Max and the two oldest boys Murray and Kelly, decided to go into trucking. They formed a company called Gangster Transfer Ltd. and began to haul drilling mud to oil rigs. At first they hauled for two mud companies with two trucks. When a third son, Kirk, got older he joined the company too and with their combined efforts and a lot of hard work, they began to prosper. They have also acquired more farm land and some commercial property.

The boys are still active in sports. Kelly started driving a chuckwagon in 1969. He and his wife Debbie and their two children travel from May until the end of August following the professional rodeo circuit. Kelly has excelled at this unusual sport.



Kelly Sutherland setting the 5/8 mile unbroken (1.08.18 min.) record at Calgary, 1972, as a longer track was built in 1974.

Kelly won the Canadian and World Championship in 1974 and the Central Championship in 1973. He won the famed Calgary Stampede in 1974. At the age of 22, he was the youngest driver ever to do so. He won it again in 1975 and finished second twice. Along with these, he has also won numerous smaller rodeos. He is also on the Board of Directors for the Canadian Rodeo Cowboys Association.

In 1976, Kirk, took up the reins to try his skill at chuckwagon racing and it looks like he will follow in his brother's footsteps, in putting Grande Prairie on the map.

They also own some Flat Racing Horses and between them, Kelly, Kirk and Max, own some 56 thoroughbred horses.

Kelly, Debbie and their family live in a new house they built in 1973 on the old Twilight School District site.

Murray, the oldest boy doesn't have the interest in horses but he is very active along with Kirk in local broomball, soccer, hockey and polo leagues. He and his wife Gloria, and one son, live in a house they built in 1973 on the old Donaldson quarter.

Sharon, now Mrs. Don Nelson, lives on a quarter section in the Sexsmith area. They have four children. Debbie, married Marty Wilson and they live just south of Grande Prairie with one son. At the time of this writing Kirk, Darlene and Bunny are all at home, with Bunny being the only one still to finish school.

— by Debbie Sutherland.

SWANSON AND FAMILY — by Mrs. Erna Schraeder, 1928-1953

Gus and Ruth Swanson and family moved to Peace River Country in 1928 from Vulcan, Alberta and bought land from Mr. Dave Axon. We lived seven miles east of Grande Prairie. The family, eight of us, stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Alex Fisher — "relatives," until my Dad, Uncle Fisher and a brother of my Dad's, Charles Swanson, and Mr. Westly Mills built the house. All of us children were born in southern Alberta. Arthur Swanson now living in Oregon, U.S.A. Erma "Swanson" Schraeder lives in Surrey, B.C. Ruth "Swanson" Lockyer lives in Surrey, B.C. Cecil Swanson lived in Red Deer, Alberta and Max Swanson lived in Dawson Creek, B.C.



Swanson's schoolbus in the 1930's.

We came by train from Vulcan to Grande Prairie. My father and Arthur and Roy came earlier by train taking our furniture and possessions by boxcar. Our house wasn't completely finished when we moved in but Uncle Alex Fisher and Aunty Easter Fisher were glad to see us move. Our neighbours were Mr. and Mrs. Westly Mills, Mr. Tommy Warden, Mr. and Mrs. Maile, Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler and also a Mr. Vern Goff. We went to Five Mile Creek School then and later to Twilight School when it was built. We had no well on our farm so had to haul drinking water from John Blimke about a mile and a half from our place. In the winter we melted snow for drinking and washing. That was generally up to us kids to haul in the snow and dump it in a barrel. Dad built a dam as a creek ran through our property. The water was used for washing and swimming in the summer. We children learned to swim in the dam, as did other children in the neighbourhood.

Dad farmed for years with horses and mules. He also cared, for and ran race horses owned by Mr. Frank Donald. Arthur and Roy rode the race horses.

Two of my brothers joined the Army. Roy in 1942 and Cecil just before the war ended. My sister Ruth was quite the athlete, she ran foot races and played ball.

Our Mother, Mrs. Ruth Swanson, is in the eighties and lives in Langley, B.C. Our father, Gus, passed away in 1966 in Vancouver General Hospital at the age of 74, November 7, 1966.

There was a child born in our house in the 1930's delivered by Mrs. Alex Fisher and my Mother, Mrs. Ruth Swanson. It was a cold stormy night Mom and Dad had been to a school meeting, I was very glad they were home for the event.

JAMES SMITH TEEPLE — 1894-1961 — by Rudy Marek

Jim Teeple came to Grande Prairie from the east and in 1923 in May bought a quarter section from Adouphus C. Davis. The first time I went to Jim's, on an errand, I heard him start the water pump engine and it quit. I went into the pump house and Jim wasn't in the best of moods. He put a new gasket in and started it and the engine blew the head gasket again. He said he couldn't fix it until he went to town to get a new gasket which would be the next day. I was ten years old then.

Jim was a good neighbour. He liked to talk and play with young children.

He sold his farm after the war to Hugo Zelling in 1947. He had an auction sale in October of 1947 and got more for his Case tractor then he paid for it new. The other machinery sold high too.

Jim went on a vacation to the west coast. When he came back he bought the Murray Hotel and had it until he died in an auto accident in 1961. Jim had a brother who lived northwest of Grande Prairie.

JOHN WALDNER — by Carol Adams (Waldner)

John and Sarah Waldner arrived in Grande Prairie by train in 1927. They had come from Watrous, Saskatchewan. With them came three children:

Walter, Olga and Annie. They lived in various locations in the Grande Prairie, and Clairmont area, where Mr. Waldner earned a living, farming and hauling wood. Five more children were born to John and Sarah: Andy, Maggie, Sarah, Tina and Johnny.



Mr. and Mrs. John Waldner Sr.

The Waldner children, by going to different schools in and around Grande Prairie, grew to know many people in the area. They were also music lovers. By going to dances in the district, two of the Waldner brothers met their wives. Andy and Walter met and married Marion Bredeson and Angie Olson, who were cousins.

Walter worked for various people around Grande Prairie before and after he was married. Walter and Angie moved to the Olson farm at Bezanson where besides farming, Walter has built several local residents' homes. For the past seventeen years, Walter has been employed in Senior Citizen Homes in Grande Prairie. He's always been a favorite with the patients he's worked with.

Andy has always been a carpenter. He built his mother a home in Clairmont when he was only seventeen. Since then his work has been appreciated all over Grande Prairie. At present, Andy lives in Grande Prairie, where he is self-employed as a cabinet maker. He and Marion have five children.

Annie and Maggie met and married brothers Louis and Roy Erickson. The two young men were training in Grande Prairie as enlisted men. After they were wed, both couples moved to Girouxville, where they farmed till retirement. Annie and Louis live in Falher, Maggie and Roy in Girouxville.

Olga married in 1943, resided in Grande Prairie until 1957, when she and her husband moved to Dawson Creek where they still reside.



Waldner family — Andy, Johnnie, Walter, Tena, Annie, Maggie. Front row: Sarah, Olga.

Tina married Lloyd Pitman, a government employee. As newlyweds, they travelled around extensively, as Lloyd then worked for an oil company. They presently live in Grande Prairie.

Sarah met her husband Jim Thompson through her brother Johnny. Both men were employed for N A D P. Sarah and Jim have lived in Grande Prairie all of their married life.

Johnny, the youngest is also employed as a carpenter. He is also a well known musician and lives in Grande Prairie.

Mr. John Waldner, Sr. met a violent and tragic death in November of 1946. He was struck by a train, while crossing the track going to his team of horses. After her husband's death, Mrs. Waldner lived a quiet life with members of her family until her passing in September of 1966.

ANDREW (ROY) WATSON

I came to Grande Prairie from Chipman, Alberta with my parents Andrew and Mary Watson and various brothers and sisters, March, 1929. My parents farmed three-quarter miles southwest of the town. I homesteaded at Demmit until 1933 and then returned to assist my father on the farm until 1940 when I went overseas with the Calgary Tank Regiment. I was taken prisoner of war, during the Dieppe Raid, August, 1942. After being released I returned to England where I met and married Ruby Morris at Brentwood, Essex. Returning home I worked in the North West feedmill in Edmonton until spring of 1946. Ruby arrived at that time and we commenced farming in the Twilight District on the original Harrison farm. Although we acquired the east half section we moved into the Harrison house since it was unoccupied at that time. We moved into town each winter.

The following spring Miron and Alberta McKeeman, from the Buffalo Lake area, bought the west section and we shared the house for approximately five months until we built a temporary dwelling to spend the summer months in.

RUBY WATSON

My first impression of Grande Prairie was one of utter bewilderment at the vastness of the country. At times I felt that I was the only one living in Canada! Although I came from a small village called "Vange" in England, we the inhabitants, all lived fairly close. A trip to a larger town was just a bus ride away, ten miles at the most.

However, I soon (well maybe not too soon) found out that I was not alone. Our only means of transportation was a borrowed democrat from Jack Oatway. We sometimes used our old wagon, which I insisted on placing a chair in to sit on, for our rare visits to town. I discovered many years later how much mirth and merriment this caused the inhabitants of Grande Prairie. The flies and mosquitoes were very bad in those days, the latter just loved my fresh "Limey" blood. I made the usual "mistakes" that the green horns make and will never forget the horror on Gene Kuykendall's face when I complained because it was raining a little. He soon told me in no uncertain terms that the local farmers had been praying for rain for weeks!!

Possibly our closest neighbors were Gordon and Marge Oatway who were always very helpful and friendly, as were all "The Oatways" and the community as a whole. Marge taught me the techniques of preserving fruit and vegetables and on the particularly unpleasant days Gordon would pick me up and take me to their home with the comment that "misery likes company". Marge was always baking some delectable thing and I can still remember the delicious aroma in her kitchen. Rupert and Iris Carveth often came to my rescue also, and I am most grateful to them for it, and the happy social events we all shared together.

The McKeemans with their baby son, Dennis, born on the 15th of January, 1947 and us with our baby girl, Mary, born February 7th, 1947 lived in complete harmony and congeniality. We will be eternally grateful to the Kuykendalls for coming to our rescue and providng us shelter in their home for several days during a severe dust storm which whipped the west section. The house was in direct line for the onslaught. We still laugh to this day at how shocked and dismayed we were to see our precious babies with their eyes, noses and mouths filled with dust once we reached the highway and daylight. We still wonder how Miran ever located his Model A Ford which was packed in the field, and eventually took us to safety. Roy was seeding at the time and had quite a time controlling his panic stricken horses.

Many incidents remain clear to me, too numerous to mention. One is the fact that to nurse a baby at that particular time seemed to be "taboo" and many's the time when we went to town we would stop at Marek's Taxi Stand, which was always filled with laughing young people, and dear Mrs. Marek would discreetly usher me into the kitchen or anywhere else that happened to be uninhabited so that I could nurse my baby privately.

We sold the first quarter in 1963 and the second in 1969. Since then we have lived and worked in Grande Prairie. Mary and her husband and two children live in Ft. McMurray. Our sons Mac (Malcom) and Morris both live and work here in Grande Prairie.

THE HERMAN WENDT FAMILY

Herman was sixth in the family. After finishing school at Dresden, North Dakota he went north into



Lottie and Herman Wendt, centre. Clockwise — Joyce, Dorothy, Bill, Carol, Bob, Helen, Neil, Doug, Barbara, Ted, Irene (deceased).

Manitoba where he worked on farms and lumber camps for some time.

He then joined the R.C.M.P. Some time later he came down with typhoid fever and had to leave the police force and go home to recuperate.

When he finally came back to Canada he moved further west into Alberta where he homesteaded not too far from Edmonton.

A few months later he joined the Canadian Army during World War I and spent almost three and a half years with the Army. After Armistice, Herman was sent home on a stretcher and spent some time in the Lamont Hospital. A Major in the Army wanted Herman's homestead and the Government gave it to him, improvements and all. Herman got back his homesteading rights.

While running a hotel he was interested and active in both hockey and ball.

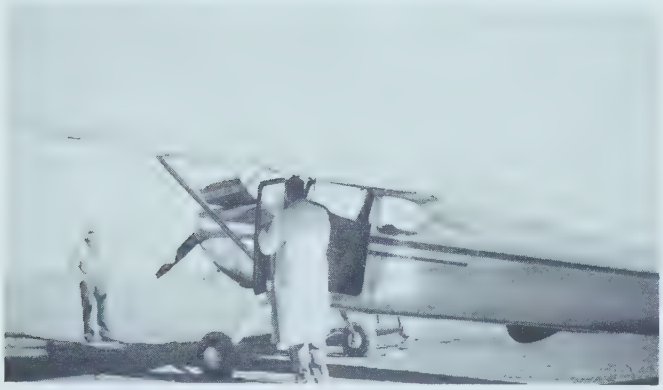
Later he went back to farming in the Lamont area. In 1925 and 1926 Herman went north into the Peace River area and filed on land in the Whitelaw area. The next year he and his cousin Frank Wilson bought land twelve miles from Grande Prairie. In the summer of 1928 Herman met and married Lottie Benn, a neighbour.

Lottie was born in Ontario, spent five years in Syracuse, New York, then back to Kingston, Ontario until Armistice was declared after World War I. The family then moved to Saskatchewan where Lottie finished school. Then taking her younger brother Joe moved on to the Peace River area where she kept house for her father. Her two brothers Gerald and Kenneth followed a few months later.

The first year Herman and Lottie spent on the outskirts of Grande Prairie. Then in 1930 having bought land from Cecil Carveth. Jack Haan built a house and Herman and Lottie and infant daughter, Joyce, moved onto the farm in the fall.

In the spring of 1931 the second daughter, Dorothy was born and the day mother and daughter were to go home the house burned down. Mr. and Mrs. Raison took in the family until a makeshift dwelling was fixed up suitable for habitation. The neighbors had a gathering in the old log hall and brought many useful articles as well as food.

In the summer of 1931, Herman, Lottie and the man they had hired, Fred Kowalik, all homesteaded at



Herman Wendts, Cesna 170, 4-seater plane. First farmer-owned plane in the district.

Crooked Creek, for the next five years time was spent mostly on the homestead putting in homestead duties.

Bill and Carol were both born on the homestead and Joyce started school at Ridgevalley.

As the times improved, the family moved back to the farm in Twilight area and in 1939 started to build a new house. They lived in it until 1966 when the family moved to Grande Prairie.

During those years the family grew until there were ten children. In the spring of 1955 Fred Kowalik passed away suddenly in Edmonton with a heart attack. He had been as one of the family for twenty-three years.

Joyce is married to Rod Sipe and lives at Demmitt. Graydon Sipe, Rod's father was an old friend of Herman's, he also came from the Lamont district. Joyce and Rod have seven children. Five boys and two girls. The two oldest boys, Brock and Lyle are married and Lyle has a daughter.

Dorothy married Donald LaForge and is now living on an acreage north of Grande Prairie. They have five children. The oldest boy was killed a few days before his 21st birthday in a car accident. The oldest girl is married to Bruce Guy and they have two daughters.

Bill Wendt farms near Grande Prairie. He married Marjory Porter of Calgary and has one son. Marjory had two children by a previous marriage, Leslie and Rod Porter.

Carol married Thomas Steinke of Teepee Creek. They have three sons, Dale, Stuart and Chip. After farming a few years at Teepee Creek, they moved and now live a short distance west and south of Clairmont.

Robert after farming a few years near Grande Prairie sold out, he and his wife, Kathy, live on an acreage near Edmonton. Bob has five children. Two girls and three boys.

Helen married Roland Havener, formerly of Manitoba. After living several years in Dawson Creek, B.C., they moved and now live on a farm at Teepee Creek. They have five children, three girls and two boys. Another boy drowned while still very young. The oldest girl Karen is married and has a son.

Neil married Heather Skaley of Rycroft where Neil worked in the bank. They have six children, one girl and five boys. Neil spent several years farming. They lost one house in a fire. They now live in Grande Prairie.

Douglas lives in a mobile home on the outskirts of Edmonton as he has for several years. He works in an automotive shop in downtown Edmonton. He is not married.

Barbara and Carla are now living in Grande Prairie after having lived several years in Prince George.

Ted, after spending some time in Edmonton is back home in Grande Prairie. Ted is not married.

Many happy years were spent on the farm near Grande Prairie. We met many interesting people who stopped in for one reason or another. In the early years it was bad roads. Even the bus stopped a few times wanting help. This was before the road was hard surfaced, but we still see and hear from some of our callers even though some were from the U.S.A.

Only once were we ever bothered by Hallowe'en pranksters. We found out later it was one of our girls and the dog wouldn't tell on her. She had been away some time and the dog welcomed her home with her friends.

While growing up the girls were interested in ball games and sometimes still play.

The boys leaned toward the western type of entertainment. Bill followed the rodeo for a few years. While on the farm the boys had their cattle and corrals and sometimes had their own private rodeo.

Usually Sunday morning I had to go to each room and count heads as we never knew how many friends the children brought home with them. At times there were more in one bed then was comfortable but somehow they didn't seem to mind and had a sleep in spite of the squeeze.

DOROTHY WINTERS (ROBERTSON)

We arrived in the Five Mile District sometime in the summer of 1932. My mother married Jacob Wurtz of that district. My two brothers, Bill and Herb, myself and Mother were the part of the family to come there. I had more brothers and one sister, some were married and stayed in Wembly and district. Herb only

stayed one year and then, being sixteen, returned to Wembly to work as these were really hard times. My sister being married and living in Wembly made a second home for the boys and I returned there many times on school holidays.

The first year we spent on the same farm as a stepbrother, Andy Wurtz. Andy and Kate had four children so we had company. As Bill and I only spoke English and these children only spoke German at the time, I guess we gave the grown-ups some great laughs trying to communicate. After a while we learned a few words in German and they learned a few words in English and we were well away. I can't remember if we spent one or two years going to Five Mile Creek School, then moved to a farm farther north and east, actually just across the road north of Swanson's, who were our nearest neighbors. Ruth and I remained good friends until marriage, distance, a war and time came between. We have not seen each other for quite a few years now. We had Mailes for neighbors on the other side. This move put us in the Twilight School District which Bill and I attended until we each passed out of grade eight.

The Twilight School as I remember had around 20 to 25 students from grades one to eight. We had a well known mixed softball team for many years. We always put on a nice Christmas Concert every year. Most children walked to school in summer or rode horseback. We had a horse and cutter in the winter and had about two and a half miles to go. I think only one or two of the families in the district owned cars so nearly all transportation was by horse and buggy or sleigh — according to the season.

Our home was heated with wood and lighted with coal-oil lamps. We had a well for water but as it was some distance from the house, it was hauled in barrels on a stoneboat to the back door.

We had quite good gardens in those years, also raised chickens, turkeys, geese and ducks. There was one cow for milk. My stepfather raised grain and I believe had some good crops of wheat. Farming was done with work horses so we had quite a few and each year raised one or two colts.

We moved from the Twilight district to Grande Prairie, where a few years later my stepfather passed away. My mother resided there for a few more years then moved back to Wembly to be near more of the family. I, in the mean time married and moved to Grovedale where I have resided for the past thirty-four years.

THE WURTZ FAMILY

The Wurtz family originally came from Saskatchewan. The great-grandparents were Michael and Sarah (Tschritter) Wurtz. The grandparents were Jack and Annie (Kleinsasser) Wurtz. To this family were added seven children — Annie, Sarah, Mary, Christine, Mike, Andrew and Helen. Andrew and Helen are the only ones of this family still living. He lives here in Grande Prairie and she lives in Ontario.

Mr. Mike Wurtz married Katherine Hofer at Waterous, Saskatchewan on March 27th, 1924. To their marriage union was added nine children. Little Evelyn was born on May 20, 1925 but only lived for five days.

Mike was a farmer and farmed with his father, Jacob, in the Waterous area. On September 10, 1926 their first son, Elden, was born. In the fall of 1927 they moved, along with the great-grandparents and grandparents to the Grande Prairie area. Great-granddad passed away on June 17, 1928 and was buried in the Clairmont cemetery. They farmed the place at the four mile corner which is now known as the Kehr farm. In January, 1929 their second son, Norman, was born. They then sold the farm to Lee Alward and after this, they all moved back to Saskatchewan only to find out that they had no farm there anymore. While they were there on January 17, 1930, Melva was born. Grandma Annie Wurtz passed away in 1931 and her body was brought back to Alberta to be buried. They then decided to move back to the Grande Prairie area around 1931 or 1932 where they settled. They farmed in the Five Mile district from the years 1932 to 1943. Four more children were born while living there — Violet in 1933, Bob in 1935, Ed in 1938 and Albert in 1942. One fall, the snow came quite early and threshing hadn't been completed yet. So when they went to move the thresher from one place to another, it tipped over in the ditch while turning a corner. From then on they had to move it on a sleigh until the crop was off. In 1935, great-grandmother, Sarah, passed away and in 1939 grandfather, Jacob, passed away. They were both buried in the little cemetery at Clairmont. The oldest five children started school at Five Mile School. Some didn't get very far while others went higher. In 1941, Elden was already working out and starting to help support the family. He worked at the Grande Prairie airport during this year.

In March, 1943 they moved to the Clairmont district and lived there till May, 1947. Their father worked out for different people during this time. Ed started school in the little school house at Clairmont, but later had to continue in Grande Prairie. It was here in Clairmont that the twins, Franklin and Winston, were born in 1945. This added much excitement to this already full household, and there was never a dull moment. Melva quit school just before this time in order to help her mother with the twins. Because there were the two of them and they had each other, they were never in a hurry to walk or talk. Albert was their little supervisor and the three of them were always together.

They moved to the Kleskun Lake district for the summer of 1947. Mike worked as a mechanic for Thomson Motors in Grande Prairie during this period of time.

In October of 1947 they moved to the Grande Prairie district and lived there till May, 1949. It was now time for Albert to leave the twins and go to school and he started and graduated in Grande Prairie. Norman was now working out at various places wherever he could find work. He worked for Jack Mackey from 1948 to 1949, and in 1949 along with another fellow, they made concrete sidewalks, etc., in Hythe. At one time he worked for Mountview Trailer sales and would play his guitar on their radio advertisements.

The family then moved to the Twilight district in 1949 and were there till October, 1953. They lived at what they called the "Fisher" place and also at the "section". Their father looked after these farms

where they lived. In 1951 Melva started to work at the Grace Children's Home in Dimsdale and worked there off and on for the next thirteen years. And in the fall of 1951, Violet went to Bible School in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan for a year. Before she went there, she used to work for different people and at a couple of cafes in town. Elden was very active in the rodeo and stampede days at Bezanson. He enjoyed and liked riding the bucking horses. When Bob was only fifteen, he left home to go to work. He went to the Hollingsworths at Teepee Creek and worked there for eight years. But during the winter months he would work in bush camps. The twins started school at Five Mile School. On account of their moving so often it was said that they didn't even have time to learn the colour of their teacher's dresses. Most of the time they had to walk to school which was about two miles one way. During the cold months in the winter time they would be able to use the sleigh and horses. To have some fun on their way home to the section place from school in the sleigh, they would take a blanket and throw it over Eddie sometimes and take him down. Then they whipped the horses with the lines and Albert instead of helping would stand at the back screaming which made the horses go faster. On another time the tongue of the sleigh came loose and the sleigh stopped but the horses and Eddie kept right on going. There could be many stories told about them going to and from school but only a couple have been given. It was at the Fisher place in October, 1953, that their father, Mike passed away and he was buried in Grande Prairie.

Their mother moved the family to Clairmont in 1953. The twins continued their schooling here and because of them being twins, they were able to fool quite a few people at times and had lots of fun doing it. Elden and Eddie both worked for Bruce Hollingsworth at Valleyview. In June, 1955 Elden got hit over the head with a steel pipe while working there and he thought he would never make it, but he did. Then in August of 1958, he started with the department of highways as a cat operator and worked with them for five to six years. Bob was doing some work with construction crews in Grande Prairie area during this time. Ed then went out to the Grace Children's Home in 1960 and stayed there for two years. He also worked at George Stevens bush camp in the winter months. Now Albert was starting to work out and took different jobs during summer months while going to school. The school in Clairmont was closed so the twins had to ride the bus to Grande Prairie. Even these rides proved quite interesting at times. In 1964 Melva returned home because of her health so she was company for her mother while all the boys were away. It wasn't too long and the twins quit school and started to work. The summer months found them on farms which they enjoyed to the fullest and in the winter they would go to the bush. Albert had by this time gone to Bible School in Edmonton and graduated from there in the spring of 1967. Even though most had left home and gone their own way, home was still where their mother was and this was in Clairmont. Much of her life was hard but she kept on going and her later years were much more pleasant for her. It was on September 14, 1971 that she ended her earthly journey when the Lord called her home from her home in Clairmont. She was buried in Grande Prairie on the 18th of September.

On September 25, 1965, Elden married Ruby Stark. They have lived in different places but now reside in Valleyview where he is working as a cat operator once again. They have six children — five from her previous marriage and one little boy of their own.

Norman lives and works in Grande Prairie.

Melva lives in the Auxiliary Hospital in Grande Prairie.

Violet met and married Fred Reath of Vulcan, Alberta on February 19, 1955. He farms at Vulcan and has been doing this since they were married. They have eight children — seven boys and one girl.

Bob lives in Grande Prairie. He works at North Canadian Forest Industries and has been there for some time now.

Ed met Vera Schenfield of Wildwood, Alberta at the Grace Children's Home and they were married on January 23, 1968. He farms out northeast of Valleyview and also raises cattle. They have four little girls.

Albert has moved around over the past few years in his work with Macleods. He started in Fort St. John, B.C. and now is in Peace River, as an assistant manager.

Franklin married Joanne Martin of Grande Prairie on April 19, 1973. He works for North Canadian Forest Industries and they live in Clairmont. They have adopted a little girl and have a little boy of their own.

Winston married Barbara Summach of Grande Prairie on August 15, 1970. He works for North Canadian Forest Industries and they live in Clairmont. They have one little boy.

HUGO ZELLING

I was born in the district of Malinufka, Poland on December 2, 1919. I immigrated with my parents and three sisters to Canada in June of 1928, arriving at Wembly in July. We spent the first night at the farm home of Val Henning's parents who had picked us up at the station.

We stayed at my Uncle's place, Henry Stefan, until



Hugo Zelling family.

we located some land and built a small log shack with a sod roof. Dad bought the land from Jack Heikel. This place was 8¾ miles south of Huallen, Art Bateman farms the land now.

In the fall of 1930 I started school, walking three miles, in later years we drove a team in the winter. The school was Aspen Dale and later about 1940 it was moved two miles west and renamed Aspen Ridge.

In the spring of 1940 I moved to a homestead eight miles north of Hines Creek. In June of 1941 I was requested to report for Army training at Grande Prairie. One week later I joined the Royal Canadian Army Service Corp. We trained here for two months and for two more months in Red Deer. After one week's leave I got shipped to Farnbourgh, England in time for my 22nd birthday. I was through France, Belgium, Holland and into Germany, returning home in October, 1945.

On October 14, 1947, I moved to S.W. 5-72-5-W6, 4½ miles northeast of Grande Prairie which I had purchased from Jim Teeple through a V.L.A. loan.

For a few years I had Ruby Marek do my threshing till he was unable to get more help. I had a lot of help and good advice from the Marek's which I sure appreciated. Also I had a lot of help and advice from the Blimke brothers, Martin, Bill and Allen. I harvested wheat, oats, barley and some flax.

In early spring of 1960 I moved to the Northside of Bear Lake on N.W. 33-72-7-W6, three-quarters of a section. During this time I met a widow who had grown up in the area, Helen Wallace, nee Gorrie, who had a four year old son, Gordon. We got married October 14, 1960. She owned a section of land which she sold in May, 1961. I took over the machinery to trade off on other machines.

In the spring of 1968 we bought W.½ 34-72-7-W6 from Henry Penner known as the Showers place.

We sold the land in 1974.

We bought a house in Grande Prairie and we are taking things easy. Last days of June in 1975 we went on a month's trip with our two boys to West Europe and Edinburgh, Scotland, visiting Uncles, Aunts and cousins. Gordon has been working a coal mine in Coleman for over a year now. Jim is at home. He was born July 18, 1961, and is going to Montrose taking grade nine. Melvin was born March 17, in 1964 and is going to Avondale and in grade six.

Mother passed away in November, 1966 at 78 years of age. Father passed away at Swanhaven Nursing Home, July, 1975 at age 89 years. My oldest sister Adela married Walter Reinitz from Wembly, now living in Penticton, B.C.

My second sister Frieda marriex Xafer Abt of Grande Prairie, they are now separated and she is living near Edmonton.

My youngest sister Leona married Otto Schadeck from south of Huallen. After 26 years of farming they are living now in Grande Prairie.

Schools

TWILIGHT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4417 — Gerald Carveth

To relate the history of the Twilight school district we must go back to 1914 when the Five Mile Creek district was formed and a school was opened on the Jack Axon land in the centre of the district. This worked very well, until about 1926 when more homesteaders with families, located farther south and there were few children of school age left in the north end of the district so the school was moved two miles south.



Good Old Twilight!

In 1928, several families came from the drier areas in Southern Alberta and bought land in the north end of the district and school became a problem as Five Mile Creek school was full to capacity. A public meeting was held at the home of Lafe Benbow to consider what to do and it was decided to try to get a school started. At this meeting, Gus Swanson, William Maile and Gerald Carveth were elected as Trustees and Charles Raison was appointed secretary-treasurer. The board contacted Mr. H. E. Balfour, Inspector of Schools and the Department of Education who were also concerned about the lack of a school and the district was officially formed on June 7, 1929.

And so it was that after the debentures had been paid on the Five Mile Creek school, the northern residents were forced to undergo another series of debentures for the Twilight school, tenders were let for the building and school was opened after New Year's Day, 1930 with seventeen pupils present and the first teacher was Charles A. Cromie who remained for three and a half years. Mr. Cromie now resides in Sherwood Park, Alberta.



Twilight Class — 1931.

The Department of Education required three names to be submitted by the Trustees for the name of the school and the one that came to the Trustees' minds first was Skunk Hollow as within a stone's throw of where the school was to be built, had at one time been a coyote den but lately had been over-run with a large colony of skunks and several buggies and cars passing by on the trail had been profusely sprayed with the aroma. However, it was thought that the name might have repercussions in later years so Skunk Hollow was relegated to third position and Twilight, chosen for first place.

Before school opened, every taxpayer in the new district drew up a sleigh load of firewood and a bee was held to saw it up. This policy continued throughout the depression years of the 1930's, thereby reducing the operating expense of the school.

A few years after the school was built, a large crack opened up in the foundation on the south side of the school and honey bees started a home there. It became so bad that children were stung most unmercifully and softball was curtailed because the home plate was only a short distance away as the school was used as a back-stop. The ever resourceful secretary, Charles Raison, made a proposition to the Inspector of schools that if he were given permission to use the honey in the bee's nest, he would open the foundation, remove the bees and patch up the wall. This was done and the bees were no longer a problem.

Although the school district was very small, being sandwiched in between other districts, it became a great social centre and people enjoyed it's Annual Picnic, Christmas Tree entertainment, sports, dances and that homemade ice cream.

In 1950 the Twilight school was taken over by the Divisional School Board, the children bussed to Grande Prairie and the school was moved to Torun school district near Webster. This was practically the end of the district's social life and the residents felt



Twilight School Ball team — 1938.



Twilight Class — 1935.

that they had suffered quite a loss with the removal of the school but they have fond memories of the Twilight activities.

The teachers of Twilight school and their periods of employment are given below:

* Charles A. Cromie — January 1, 1930 to June 30, 1933.

* Maud Nowlin — September 1, 1933 to June 30, 1935.

Gerald G. White — September 1, 1935 to June 30, 1936.

William S. Porteous — September 1, 1936 to June 30, 1937.

Ann C. Mix — September 1, 1937 to June 30, 1938.

Ethel A. Meyer — September 1, 1938 to June 30, 1939.

* Bernice A. Beveridge — September 1, 1939 to June 30, 1941.

Irene Lewis — September 1, 1941 to June 30, 1942.

Mrs. E. Morris — September 1, 1942 to June 30, 1943.

Mrs. Jean Westendorf — September 1, 1943 to June 30, 1944.

Mary Nicholychuk — September 1, 1944 to June 30, 1945.

Mary Roberts — September 1, 1945 to June 30, 1946.

* Shirley Colton — September 1, 1946 to June 30, 1948.

Dorothy Rehaume — September 1, 1948 to June 30, 1949.

Mrs. Isabel Moodie — September 1, 1949 to June 30, 1950.

(The teachers with an asterisk before their names, taught for more than one year.)

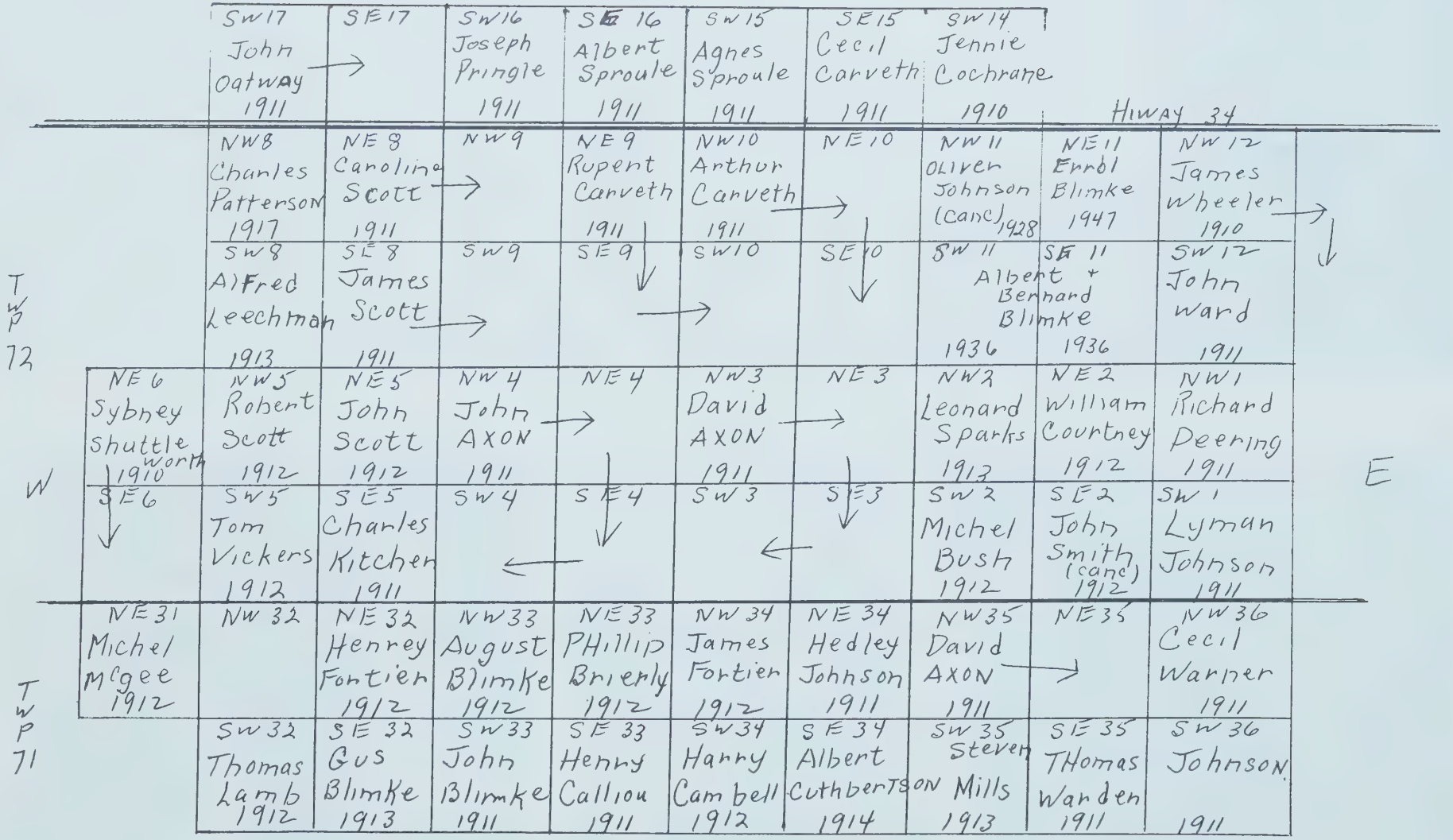
The pupils attending Twilight school when it was opened in January, 1930 were as follows: Herbert Nerstad, grade 1, Olga Maile, grade 1, Emily Marek, grade 1, Rudolf Marek, grade II, Lydia Maile, grade II, Ruth Swanson, grade II, Fred Maile, grade IV, Arthur Maile, grade IV, Christina Mills, grade IV, Roy Swanson, grade IV, Dorothy Nerstad, grade IV, Mary Harrison, grade IV, Erma Swanson, grade V, Orval Bayley, grade VII, Bert Harrison, grade VII, Arthur Swanson, grade VII, Keith Benbow, grade VIII.

Other pupils who attended the Twilight School: Jimmie, Betty and Edna Carveth, Jean Carveth, Elmer Bailey, Ivan Benbow, Don Blimke, Roy, Violet

Range 5

N

Twilight School District
16 Sections
Original Homesteaders



S

568

and Nora Donaldson, Irene Duda, Randall, Lorraine and Norman Edwards, Rie, Christine and Toozie Fonville, Gladys Gould, Allan, Violet and Harold Hraff, Stella Harle, Violet and Jimmie Harrison, Raymond Innes, Irving, Roy, Jean and Freda Knox, Lyle and Grace Kuykendall, Eileen, Adam, Leonora and Bill Maile, Robert, John, Olga and Betty Marek, Robert and Leonard Mathews, Christina Mills, Jerry and Sharon Moodie, Phyllis Morrow, James and Murray Oatway, Ed, Eugene, Florence and Ted Packnoski, Baxter Patterson, Fern and Helen Patterson, Dorothy and Bill Robertson, Teresa, Dickie, Margaret and Ambrose Robinson, Cecil and Max Swanson, Walter, Olga and Annie Waldner, Roy and Marlene Watson, Joyce, Dorothy, Bill, Bob, Carol, Helen, Neil and Douglas Wendt, Rolf, Astrid, Sigrid, and Ingrid Westerndorf, Frank and Shirley Wheeler, Violet, Robert, Rudy and Albert Wurtz.

October 17th, 1953.

Department of Education,
Edmonton, Alberta.

Dear Sir:

This is to request Ministerial Approval for the selling of the barn and school site at Twilight School District to M. Lewis and C. Wright for $100.00. Lewis and Wright have purchased the N.E.¼ of 4-72-5-6.

The land and the barn were advertised for sale prior to the County meeting of October the 9th, in which the approval for this sale was granted.

Yours truly,

R. B. Bowen,
Secretary Treasurer.
RBB-rk

TEACHER'S WAR SAVINGS REPORT
Name of School: Twilight
Town or City: Grande Prairie, Alberta.
County:
Grade: II, III, V, VI, VIII, IX
No. of Pupils: 17 No. Subscribing: All
Total Stamps sold since last Report:
Total Stamps sold to date: $23.69
No. of Pass Books completed and Certificates applied for: 4
Remarks: We started late, and did well nevertheless.
Date: July 5 Signature of Teacher: M. Nickolychuk

August 25th, 1952.

Department 4,
Department of Education,
EDMONTON, ALTA.

Dear Sir:

Re: Twilight School 4417

This is to advise you of the following resolution passed at a meeting of the school committee on the 9th day of July, 1952.

"Moved by Councillor P. C. Johnson that the Twilight School be moved to the Torun School District providing the Committee obtain favourable report from the residents of the Twilight School District, and subject to the Ministerial approval."

At a meeting of the ratepayers of the Twilight School District Number 4417 held on the 6th day of August, 1952, the following resolution was passed.

"Moved by Mr. G. V. Carveth that the ratepayers will give their consent to moving of school and teacherage providing assurance is given that a school will be provided if at a future date, the majority of the electors and ratepayers think it necessary to have a school in the Twilight district."

Would you please advise us if the Minister approves of the moving of this school?

Yours truly,

R. B. Bowen,
Secretary-Treasurer.
RBB: EML

North Bank, Alta.
Aug. 30, '44

Bette Tissington,
Grande Prairie,
Alta.

Dear Madam:

I would like a few particulars regarding Twilight School. As far as the teacherage — just what am I supposed to supply? What furnishings are there? With regard to mail service, is there a rural route or do I get mail in town? What facilities are there for transportation from the station to the school?

I have written to the Secretary of Twilight School but since I do not know his name, I'm wondering whether the letter will reach him.

I hope to hear from you as soon as possible and that I have not caused you too much inconvenience.

Yours sincerely,
Mary Nickolychuk.

Grande Prairie, Alberta,
6th September, 1944.

Miss Mary Nickolychuk,
North Bank, Alberta.

Dear Miss Nickolychuk:

Re: Twilight.

Your are supposed to supply your own bedding. The other necessities are furnished.

The neighbors will bring the mail for you as most of them go to town two or three times a week.

You will be met at the station if you will write to me in plenty of time so that I may make arrangements.

There is a slight possibility that this school will be closed as the enrolment has dropped to ten. Of course this is not definite, but when determined you will be notified. Naturally, we will keep in mind, your desire to be close to your friend, Miss Roberts and will do the very best we can for you.

Yours very sincerely,

Superintendent.

Minutes of Meeting of Ratepayers of Twilight S.D. No. 4417. Held at the Schoolhouse, at the call of the

School Committee of the County of Grande Prairie No. 1, Wednesday Evening, August 6, 1952.

Present:

Mr. and Mrs. H. Wendt
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Kuykendall
Mr. and Mrs. G. V. Carveth
Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Carveth
Mr. M. McKeeman
Mr. Zelling
J. R. Stan. Hambly, Superintendent of Schools.

Mr. Hambly called the meeting to order at 8.20.

Moved by Mr. R. Carveth that Mr. Kuykendall be chairman. Seconded by Mrs. G. V. Carveth. Carried.

Moved by Mr. Kuykendall that Mrs. G. V. Carveth be secretary. Seconded by Mr. R. Carveth. Carried.

Mr. Hambly was then called upon to explain the reason for calling the meeting, namely that of seeking permission from the ratepayers of the Twilight S.D. on behalf of the School Committee, to have the school moved to Torun S.D. No. 4483 at Webster. Supt. Hambly briefly explained the centralization policy of the School Committee, outlined the need for replacing outmoded log-school buildings; and described the desire of the School Committee to effect a centralization scheme at Grande Prairie involving those school districts, adjacent to the town of Grande Prairie. He also explained the policy of the School Committee with respect to seeking permission of ratepayers for movement of schools, only after one year's successful operation of a school van and stated further, that in his opinion, the School Committee would be obligated to replace the school if a breakdown of school vanning should take place, school enrolment in the district and a desire of the majority of the ratepayers should necessitate the need, at some future date, of a school in the district.

Some discussion followed and questions were asked.

Moved by Mr. G. V. Carveth that the ratepayers will give their consent to moving of school and teacherage providing assurance is given that a school will be provided if at a future date, the majority of the electors and ratepayers think it necessary to have a school in the Twilight district. Seconded by Mr. H. Wendt. Carried.

Moved by Mr. R. Carveth that we adjourn. Sec. by Mrs. H. Wendt. 9.20 p.m.

Mrs. G. V. Carveth.
Secretary.

In your reply please refer to
File No. RSS-89

GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
TREASURY DEPARTMENT
INCOME TAX BRANCH

RSS-IE

PROVINCIAL BUILDING
EDMONTON

May 7th, 1940.



L. to R.: R. Swanson, N. Innes, E. Oatway, E. Carveth, H. Oatway, E. Evans, S. Wheeler, A. Sych, A. Marek (G. V. Carveth, Mgr.), B. Carveth, H. Murry and P. Johnston.

Dear Sir:

RE: MRS. ANNE C. BALL (nee: MIX)

Your report for the year 1937 shows the following amounts paid to Mrs. Anne Ball:

Lindsay School Division	$540.00
Twilight School Division	$250.00
Total	$790.00

As Mrs. Ball claims that she received only $725.00 please check your figures and verify or amend the amounts reported.

A reply at your earliest convenience will be greatly appreciated.

Yours very truly,
SUPERINTENDENT OF INCOME TAX.
Per: R. S. SKELTON
Assessor.

George Patterson, Esq.,
Secretary, School Division No. 4,
GRANDE PRAIRIE - Alberta.

Clubs

TWILIGHT LADIES SOFTBALL TEAM — by Gerald Carveth

The Twilight School District, situated six and one-half miles northeast of Grande Prairie, was a very small district which in 1929, was wedged in between other, early formed districts because so many farmers with families had bought land there, coming from dry areas in Southern Alberta in 1928. But there were few districts that promoted sports as much as Twilight as their school athletics and ball playing were very rewarding.

In 1938, the girls of the district thought they should have a softball team and although they had some success with local rural districts, they were no match for Reg Foster's powerful Grande Prairie team.

The following year they secured the services of "Pat" Carveth as coach of the team and with the battery of Elva Evans and Betty Carveth as pitchers with Emily Marek catching, had, by the end of the season, virtually taken over leadership of the South Peace and had wrested the Reynolds Challenge Cup from the Wembley Club who had held it for two years. After six successive years of challenges from other teams and with no more room for plates on its pedestal, it was awarded to the Twilight Ladies team in 1944.

Previous to August 3rd, 1942, Twilight had won forty-one consecutive games and held supremacy over the Dawson Creek, Spirit River, Rycroft, and Peace River teams besides winning the local games on the prairie but at that date, at Army Week at the Grande Prairie Training Centre, the Twilight girls "swung their heads off" at Joyce Funnel's record "slow" ball, pitching for the Halcourt girls with Halcourt winning the game 8 to 7, terminating Twilight's string of victories.

In 1943, Twilight lost their ace pitcher, Betty Carveth, to the Edmonton Walkrite's team and Elva Evans was assisted in the pitching department by Marie Bayens and Eileen Maile. Emily Marek had also left for the C.W.A. Corps and Marjorie Boyd took over the catching duties. There seems to be very little record of the team until the 1946 season when Twilight won twenty-four of the thirty games played and in 1947, had won nine games while losing six, up to the 8th of July.

A coach of the girl's team, Herman Wendt, became Manager in 1948 and the team disbanded after the 1949 season, completing twelve years of Twilight Ladies Softball.

At no time during their career did Twilight have enough girls to fill all the positions on the team and they invited players from neighboring districts to assist them. It was a lot of fun for the girls, travelling to so many parts of the Peace and I'm sure all who participated, will remember the eventful drive coming home from Peace River after defeating Strong Creek and the Peace River Orange Crush girls in August, 1941. The last game was called on account of rain at the end of seven innings and the team left for home in a down pour that lasted until dawn. One car got in the ditch on a couple occasions which necessitated hooking the ten husky ball players on a rope and hauling it back on the road. But the MUD! The two cars arrived in Grande Prairie when people were getting to work next morning after a very difficult drive.

Soon after taking over the coaching of the girls it became evident that safety pins were a "must" when the team played ball and they were never more needed than one time our second baseman — no name please — stooped quickly to pick up a fast ground ball and then had to walk sideways and backwards beyond a large crowd of spectators with a call for safety pins to make the necessary repairs.

PIONEER BASEBALL — by Gerald Carveth

In April of 1913, representatives from five baseball teams in the Grande Prairie District, held a meeting in Grande Prairie to form a baseball league. The league was called TWILIGHT BASEBALL LEAGUE and consisted of teams from Beaverlodge, Lake Saskatoon, Kleskun Lake, Deep Creek and Grande Prairie. Rules and regulations were agreed upon and a schedule was drawn up with the first game to be played on May 20th, with Grande Prairie at Lake Saskatoon. At the end of the season, Grande Prairie, who had two ex-professional players in their line-up came through the season without losing a game. Deep Creek was second, followed by Beaverlodge, Lake Saskatoon and Kleskun Lake.

In 1914, another team was added to the league as Buffalo Lakes considered they were ready for league play. At season's end, Deep Creek had played without a loss, Lake Saskatoon and Beaverlodge tying for second place while Kleskun Lake was next and Buffalo Lakes and Grande Prairie wound up in the basement without a win. Grande Prairie had lost their best players from the previous year.

The most notable baseball game in 1914 was an exhibition game played at the Grande Prairie sports on July 1st, when Kleskun Lake with Forrest Falk pitching, won over the powerful Deep Creek team with Rupert Carveth on the pitcher's plate with a 2-0 score.



Kleskun Lake Baseball team, 1914 (Twilight Baseball League). L. to R.: Floyd Totten, Leonard Fishburne, Albert Scheuller, Bert Hayes, Jesse Harris, Bill Barnes, Bill Harris, Jim Beard, Milt Armstrong, Forrest Falk and Manager, George Bass.



Deep Creek Baseball team, 1914 (Twilight Baseball League). L. to R.: Pat Carveth, Wes Bentley, Wiley Sawyer, Eric Anderson, Fred Boyd, Lyman Johnson, Boody Sprague, Ray Hegler, Rupert Carveth, and Hugh Boyd.

In 1977, Forrest still chuckles over this victory and well he might for it was Kleskun Hill's only win over Deep Creek and this game was worth considerable money.

In 1915 Deep Creek again claimed the pennant with only one loss during the season. Next in order were Beaverlodge, Lake Saskatoon, Grande Prairie and Buffalo Lakes. Kleskun Lake did not field a team in 1915 and some of their players were on the Grande Prairie team.

Deep Creek had the first "skinned" diamond on the Grande Prairie as the manager of the team, Cecil W. Johnston, had been active with baseball teams in Ontario and he made the Deep Creek diamond something to behold with its lime marked base lines — quite a contrast to the grass diamonds at other team's home grounds at that time.

In the fall of 1915, all of the teams on the prairie were decimated by so many of the players leaving to go overseas to fight for their country and league baseball was not possible until the war was over.

The baseball games were well attended and the umpires had a very difficult time keeping the crowds from overflowing onto the base lines as enthusiasm was so intense. The Deep Creek team was always fearful of playing on the Beaverlodge diamond for there were more girls there than any other place and they made playing really hectic for Deep Creek especially the catcher, Rae Hegler, as they delighted in teasing him. Many times spectators were hit by foul balls from the bats as Dick McRae can testify as he was hit in the face in a game on June 13th, between Deep Creek and Grande Prairie while standing on or near the line between home plate and first base.

TWILIGHT MINOR BASEBALL — by Gerald Carveth

A 1938 Baseball Score Book carries the records of twenty-one games of baseball played between the Grande Prairie Midgets and the Twilight Tigers over a three year period. In 1938 these boys were 15 years and under it is remarkable how close some of the scores were in the games but there was an odd contest listed that one or the other literally ran away with the game. The congeniality of the two teams is expressed by the occasional borrowing of an extra player from the opposing team when they came to a game with a player short. Eight games were played in 1938 with Grande Prairie winning six of them. In 1939, eight games were played also but Twilight won six of them. In 1940, only five games were played with Twilight winning three to make a total over the three years of Twilight winning eleven and Grande Prairie ten.

The Twilight school was six and one-half miles northeast of Grande Prairie but it had to call on neighboring schools as there were not enough boys going to school at Twilight to field a team. Len Henning managed the Grande Prairie Midgets and Pat Carveth was in charge of the Twilight Tigers.

The score book shows a B. Carveth playing on the Twilight line-up in nine of the twenty-one games played. The Grande Prairie boys usually voiced their objection to this player on the team, who was injected into the line-up when Twilight was short a player. Possibly this was a part of the training needed for Betty to eventually make her way into the All American Girls Professional Baseball League in the summer of 1945 when she pitched for the Fort Wayne Daisies of Indiana, U.S.A.

The following is a summary of the baseball games played between the Grande Prairie Midgets and the Twilight Tigers in 1939, that was published in the NORTHERN TRIBUNE, Grande Prairie.

MIDGET BALLTOSSERS CLOSE A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL SEASON

Keen interest was taken all through the 1939 season in the Midget Games now brought to a most successful close. Many of the young chaps turned in games which stamped them as big league timber. This includes players in every department of the game.

Jimmie Harrison of Twilight topped the batters with a record average of .458. Dale Miller of Grande Prairie and Jimmie Carveth of Twilight played through the entire season without an error.

The following table tells the complete story:

Midget Balltossers Close A Highly Successful Season

1939

Jimmie Harrison, Twilight, Leads Batters With Average Of .458—Dale Miller Of Grande Prairie And Jimmie Carveth, Twilight, Play Errorless Ball—Many Of The Lads Give Promise Of Big League Timber

Keen interest was taken all through the 1939 season in the Midget Games now brought to a most successful close. Many of the young chaps turned in games which stamped them as big league timber. This includes players in every department of the game.

Jimmie Harrison of Twilight topped the batters with a record average of .458. Dale Miller of Grande Prairie and Jimmie Carveth of Twilight played through the entire season without an error.

The following table tells the complete story:

Name and Team	G	AB	R	H	SO	W	HP B	PO	A	E	Field Aver	Batt Aver
Jimmie Harrison, 1b, T.	6	24	9	11	3	3	0	33	3	3	.923	.458
Dale Miller. lf, G.P.	5	15	4	6	4	2	0	3	0	0	1000	.400
Jimmie Carveth, p, T	8	29	11	11	2	3	1	23	23	0	1000	.379
Errol Blimke, lf, T	5	14	7	5	4	4	0	5	3	2	.800	.358
Frank Turner, p, G.P	5	16	4	5	7	2	1	4	7	4	.733	.313
Eddie Nelson, c, G.P.	8	24	6	7	5	4	0	37	10	3	.940	.292
Ross Tissington, 3b, T	8	22	11	6	3	7	0	14	5	6	.760	.273
Robbie Marek, 2b, T	7	30	9	8	6	0	0	7	14	4	.840	.247
Cliff Wright, 1b, G.P.	6	16	5	3	4	3	1	46	3	2	.960	.188
Cecil Swanson, c, T.	8	33	11	6	4	2	1	69	6	4	.949	.182
Pete Wright, c, G.P.	5	13	2	2	6	2	3	16	8	3	.889	.154
Max Henning, ss, G.P.	8	22	5	4	3	6	0	11	10	4	.840	.136
Max Swanson, cf, T	8	28	9	3	4	3	1	2	1	4	.500	.107
Gus Kletke, rf, G.P.	5	14	1	1	6	0	0	1	4	2	.714	.071
Cecil Blimke, T.	5	15	6	1	9	4	1	0	0	0	.000	.067

T.—Twilight; G.P.—Grande Prairie.

Miscellaneous Anecdotes

TWILIGHT MEMORIES — Emily LaValley

On my first day of school, Olga Maile, showed me where to put my coat and hat, and Dorothy Nearstead, helped me draw my first margins in my scribbler.

The inspector got stuck in the snow, and while the teacher helped him out, the school was tidied up into A-one condition.

I remember the pupils chasing rabbits through the bush, into a small bluff where they were circled by the pupils, and clubbed to death, and usually taken home by a family for pig feed.

Another memory is the log jails the bigger boys built — when we played cowboys and Indians.

How many of these games are played by pupils today? Steal Sticks, Pump Pump Pullaway, Prisoners Base, Tag, Kick the Can, Anti-I-Over, Snow hockey

with homemade hockey sticks made from willow trees. Marbles, Jack in the Dark, Ring around the Roses, London Bridge is Falling Down or In and out the windows, these were all great games.

I recall a teacher asking the class what hills were used for. One pupil said, "to start cars on".

Another time when the class was discussing the defence of Canada, a pupil said "We have an Army and Navy in Regina."

Some other memories from school days are:

The pupils planting to beautify the school grounds.

Patterson trained horse, which would lie down so the little children could get on her back.

Teacher locking a pupil in the woodshed, and when the teacher returned after supper to release him — the pupil was gone.

The doctor coming to school to immunize the children, and the teacher had to run a quarter of a mile down the road to catch one pupil, as she was so scared she took off for home.

The tobacco that was smoked on the way home, by some pupils, who probably scrounged it out of their Father's tobacco can.

Teachers War Report — where children made their contributions to the War effort.

The number of horses that ran away — due to children's carelessness.

Snow forts built by the pupils.

Giving our teacher the royal bumps in a horse blanket.

Wood hauling, cutting and splitting of yearly school supply.

Picnics and Christmas concerts — "highlights of the year."

Missing school — as we couldn't find our way due to the dust storms, which actually weren't very common in this area.

The cold days when the pupils pulled their desks next to the heater, and put their feet on their coats, till the school warmed up. "The Good Old Days?"

When World War II broke out, some of the pupils of the Twilight School that served with the Armed Air Forces were: Art Maile, Rudolph Marek, Robert Marek, Emily Marek, Jim Carveth, Roy Swanson, Cecil Swanson, and Raymond Harrison.

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